A FUNCTIONAL INVESTIGATION INTO ANGER IN FAMILIES: A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST'S APPROACH TO EVERYDAY FAMILY ANGER.

by

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ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with the experience of emotion in families; specifically it examines the experience of family anger from a functional and social constructivist perspective. One hundred and one subjects currently living in a community-based familial situation completed the Family Anger Questionnaire. Primarily, an exploratory project analysis was conducted to investigate how (a) general variables (such as family relationships, positions of power, gender, age) (b) familial variables (for instance, how the family as a whole unit experiences anger), and (c) theoretical underpinnings may explain highlighted relationships. General findings indicate that families generate emotional scripts for communally accepted modes of feeling and expressing behaviour, and that the individual's experience of anger is intricately linked with his or her family's. Further, that an individual's experience will be highly influenced by their position within the family. The implications of these findings in light of present theoretical developments are discussed. Finally, ideas for future research are investigated.

1.

ANGER

This thesis seeks to address the issue of how anger is manifested within a family environment and attempts an explanation of how 'everyday' experiences of anger serve a functional nature, which preserves rather than threatens normal family functioning. This, as an otherwise unresearched area of anger and emotions, draws upon related studies of how emotions develop and their social function. Chapter 1 addresses the issue of the lack of an agreed-upon definition for anger within the literature. As is obvious from the vast number of definitions of anger, these frequently reflect a researchers theoretical persuasion. Chapter 2 gives a brief description of mainstream psychological theories of emotion and elaborates upon the weaknesses and limitations that may become apparent in adopting these as the framework from which research is conducted. Consequently Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the nature and purpose of emotions from a social constructivists perspective; explaining how anger may be experienced within the family environment and elucidating on the salient features of the theory in terms of the function of emotion in families. Social constructivism may be viewed as a theory of development. How emotions develop and are maintained within the family is addressed in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively. Descriptions of the hypotheses and method that were developed to investigate this phenomenom are presented in Chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 8 outlines the results obtained from the present study and their implications to the theoretical perspective adopted herein are analysed and discussed in Chapter 9 a model of how anger may manifest itself functionally within the family is presented. Finally a brief discussion of future areas of research is presented.

1.1 WHAT IS ANGER?

Anger is defined as one of the primary emotions in humans, visible from, or early after birth, (Izard, 1977) and has a number of contagious aspects[1] (Clynes, Jurisevic & Rynn, 1990). However, as yet, social scientists have been unable to give a full account of the necessary conditions for anger and/or aggression, and are still arguing over the processes at work (Campbell & Muncer, 1987).

While much is made in the literature of physiological, genetic, drive and arousal "causes" for aggression and anger, it is unlikely that our everyday discourse or explanations for these emotions and/or behaviours would include reference to such mechanisms. It seems most probable that people, rather than discussing functions they pay little attention to, have little knowledge of, or have limited access to, instead provide explanations for their behaviour based on things which they have direct access to through experience; for example, we would be more likely to give relational and/or self-preservation reasons for anger, rather than accounts which stress intra-individual and pre-conscious processes (Felson, 1983).

1 Contagious in that the dynamic expression of anger is likely to induce a similar emotional experience in individuals witnessing an angry event.

There is a large amount of variability in attempts to define anger . There have been many attempts at providing an operational definition of anger. These include:

- Anger is an immediate and temporary emotional arousal, as distinct from long term hostility or aggression (Friedman & Booth-Kewley, 1987).
- Anger is an emotional state which is defined by the presence of physiological arousal and antagonistic cognitions (Novaco, 1979).
- Tavris (1982) views anger as a social-psychological mechanism. As angry episodes occur within -1a social context their meaning can only be understood in terms of that particular context and the social contract between the antagonists.
- Solomon (1976) defined emotions as basic judgements about ourselves and our place in the world. These judgements are based on both present and past experiences. Anger, for instance, involves the set of evaluative judgements about the past, the present and the future. Anger forces the individual to ask "what will I do now?" demanding rectification of an injustice, or that a provocateur be punished etc.
- Albert Ellis (1987) presents an account of anger which stresses the negative. He states that it is due to: irrational thinking and demandingness, that anger takes the place of intelligent action, and that anger is aggressive behaviour which violates the rights of others. That anger is like temporary or continued insanity and as such is always unjustified and ineffective.
- Lerner (1985) views anger within close relationships as a "circular dance" wherein each spouse's behaviour provokes and maintains the angry behaviour of the other spouse.
- Anger is typically associated with harm that has already occurred and is generally aroused in response to some perceived misdeed, and is evoked when an individual is blocked from fulfilling a need or from obtaining a desired goal (van der Ploeg, 1983).
- Averill (1982) emphasises the highly interpersonal function and role of anger. He also notes that anger occurs most frequently between 'friends and loved ones'.

As can be seen from the many definitions, of which this is a representative few, anger has perhaps been aptly coined the "misunderstood emotion" (Tavris, 1982). It does seem safe to say there is a multiplicity, or heterogenous nature to emotions in general which the preceding definitions hint at, but fail to address in total. There is a genuine need for consistent usage of an agreed definition (Thomas & Donnellan, 1990), it may be that another theoretical perspective provides a better, more inclusive definition of anger. This thesis seeks to address this issue. The main goals, therefore, are to;

1. **Attempt to find a theoretical basis from which a full, or encompassing, definition of anger can be formulated.**
2. **Investigate and describe the nature of anger within a solely family environment.**
3. **Explain the findings above in terms of both theory and practice. That is, to integrate the reality of the familial experience of everyday anger through theory.**

1.2 WHY STUDY ANGER?

There are three main reasons why anger should be investigated from within a family setting. These include 'setting the story straight', information gathering and the generation of knowledge which may be applied to other related areas and the overall social cost of ignoring anger.

1. "RECTIFYING THE WRONGS"

Anger is frequently used almost interchangeably with terms such as 'aggression', 'hostility', 'frustration', 'irritation' and the like. However these words have derived independently of one another. Duldt (1981) postulated that the word 'anger' is derived from *angere*, the Latin word meaning to strangle or a strong feeling of displeasure in one's throat (that is an overwhelming emotive feeling within oneself), whereas 'hostility' comes from *hostilis* (meaning to act as if an enemy or to be antagonistic) and 'aggression' from *aggresus* (meaning to move toward another for the purpose of attacking). Thus these three words differ in source and meaning, and, therefore should be separated in their application to specific behaviours.

The focus on aggression by social scientists, and anger through association, has given anger a 'bad reputation' (Stearns and Stearns, 1986). However, there is no evidence that typical anger arousal experienced in everyday life will escalate to aggressive behaviour (Thomas, 1992). Thus, anger as a specific class of emotional behaviours needs to be highlighted and studied on its own, independent from aggression. We can not hope to be able to explain its role, or function in any behavioural response (for example aggression) without first understanding the workings, organisation and function of anger itself.

2. INFORMATION GATHERING

Whilst there has been an outflow of research into aggression and 'anger management', relatively little is known about the psychological origins of anger (Mizes, Morgan & Buder, 1990). Rather than being based on empirical research, many of the clinical applications of anger management stem from assumptions and beliefs, or are limited to case rather than controlled studies (Thomas & Donnellan, 1990). As such corroborative evidence is needed.

In almost all listings of the basic, or primary emotions (be they postulating innate or learned emotional expression), anger is included (Thomas & Donnellon, 1990). It is worth noting that these tend to be generated by contemporary Westerners and are, by and large, based on Western infants; as such their generalisability to all humans is questionable. These theories tend to ignore somewhat obvious cross-cultural evidence which fails to support their perspective; for instance historically the Japanese language had no word for anger (Russell, Suzuki, & Ishida, 1993; Russell, 1994); further the behaviours which Westerners label are not recognised as easily by contemporary Japanese (Russell, et al., 1993). As such a definition, or a perspective , which accounts for the cross-cultural differences in emotional expression needs to be considered, and an operational definition formulated herewith.

3. APPLICATION OF THEORY

Anger is becoming ever more present and visible within our society. Levels of violence and aggression appear frequently in news items as do instances of social or group anger (e.g., where a group has an intense feeling of social injustice). However, anger per se, is not necessarily pathogenic; the way in which an individual, or society, responds is vital (Cummings & Cummings, 1988). High levels of communally felt anger are not necessarily destructive, they can be very powerful, inciting dramatic social changes (e.g., the results of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa during recent years). Historical inhibitions and social habits encouraging people to hide their emotions, especially the so-called 'negative' emotions, are being spurned. So, whereas twenty years ago anger was a taboo subject, it is now becoming more acceptable to express it. Self-help groups, talk shows, books, tapes,

videos and the like, encourage us to talk about the angry feelings we have within our relationships. There is a negative side to anger. Anger contributes to a number of social problems; including abuse of almost any kind, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical and verbal aggression, child abuse, physical and property damage, and health problems (such as coronary heart disease and hypertension) (Deffenbacher, Demm, and Brandon, 1986). Similarly, anger plays a major role in dysfunction for many families who seek out psychological services. As such anger can be a real threat to a family's continued existence. By investigating the environments of families when angry it may aid in helping to formulate hypotheses regarding the development of pathological anger patterns in families. Therefore, there is a need to "study anger and hostility and their developmental antecedents as primary phenomena" (Woodall & Matthews, 1989, p.404).

1.3 ANGER AND AGGRESSION

Whilst the major focus of this thesis is anger and emotions in general, it is pertinent to briefly discuss the relationship between aggression and anger.

The notion that anger and aggression are not conceptually interchangeable is supported by many theorists (e.g., Averill, 1982; Berkowitz, 1962; 1983; Novaco, 1979; Speilberger, Johnson, Russell, Crane, Jacobs & Worden, 1985) and much research has served to demonstrate that anger is neither necessary nor sufficient for aggressive behaviour to occur (Rule & Leger, 1976; Rule & Nesdale, 1974; Rule, Nesdale, & Dyck, 1975), though some research does suggest that anger will increase the probability of aggression in at least some circumstances (Fenigstein & Buss, 1974; Rule & Nesdale, 1976). The focus of this thesis will therefore consider that there is a relationship between anger and aggression, sometimes, but the focus will be on the affectual experience of anger.

2.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF EMOTION AND ANGER

It is well beyond the scope of this thesis to study the all various theoretical perspectives of emotion and anger in depth. However as a social constructivist's approach has been adopted herein, and has yet to be widely accepted within psychological circles, it is germane to give a brief overview of the central features of mainstream theories of emotion and to highlight any limitations herein.

2.1 THE BIOLOGICAL VIEW OF EMOTION

The biological view of emotions is firmly placed in the scientific or empirical tradition. Due to the complexities in generating an operational definition of emotion and the thrust for a rigidly defined methodology in scientific experimentation, theory has been inescapably interwoven into this kind of research (Strongman, 1990). Essentially a biological view of emotions assumes that emotions have developed to serve an adaptive function.

Biological views have concentrated on a psychoevoluntionary explanation for emotions (e.g., Plutchik, 1980; Panksepp, 1991). The underlying assumption inherent in this theory, is, as stated above, that emotions serve an adaptive function. Emotions have developed to help the individual adapt to significant changes within his or her environment. Biologically emotions can be viewed from many perspectives. A Darwinian perspective of emotions states that emotions have a strong genetic basis or structure, whereas in a sequential view on emotions, emotions act in more of a regulatory role; restoring the individual to a behavioural homeostasis when his or her homeostasis has been unbalanced. A third view of emotions from within the biological field emphasises emotions as primal brain processes, focusing on

neurological aspects of emotion (Panksepp, 1991). All of these alternatives demonstrate the view that emotions have a clear genetic basis and that they are evident at all levels of phylogeny (Strongman, 1990).

EVIDENCE FOR THE BIOLOGICAL VIEW

Due to increased levels of testosterone, males of most mammalian/primate species tend to be behaviourally more aggressive than the female of the species. Chimpanzees (our closest primate relative) do show what researchers refer to as 'anger', (however, it is best defined as aggression) and have been observed to emit behaviours analogous to 'sulking' or 'temper tantrums' (Hebb, 1972). These behaviours, again most notably aggression, can be best explained through a power-dominance relationship between the chimpanzees. Thus it suffices to say that there is evidence, within studies of aggression in chimpanzees, to strongly suggest that aggression and anger expression is dependent on the position of power a chimp occupies within the chimpanzee community (Buirski, Plutchik & Kellerman, 1978; Plutchick, 1980). Fear displays by primates have also been linked with the individual's position within a hierarchy of power (Plutchick, 1980).

However, there are a number of methodological problems with drawing inferences based on cross-species comparisons, most notably, the question of whether we can accurately generalise from chimpanzees to humans. Further, whilst biological origins may be very important in determining aggressiveness, anger as opposed to aggression, appears to be relatively independent of our biological heritage (Averill, 1982; Berkowitz, 1962). Consequently psychological theories as to the nature and function of emotions are plentiful. The predominant philosophical based theory of emotions is the hydraulic model; from this the majority of psychological based theories have evolved.

2.2 HYDRAULIC MODEL OF EMOTIONS

Early psychological theories of emotions were based predominantly on the view of emotions as being analogous to an hydraulics system, where they were defined in terms such as catharsis and cathexis. Solomon (1976) used the term *hydraulic,* the basis of which is Newtonian physics (many theories clearly have had this as their foundation; for example the theories of James, Freud and Jung). The hydraulic model views the human psyche as a "cauldron of pressures demanding their release in action and expression" (Solomon, 1976, p.143). These pressures are referred to as emotions (or impulses, libidinal energies, forces et cetera. depending upon the researchers theoretical stance). This view of emotions asserts that emotions; *(a)* exist independently of consciousness, *(b)*are caused by forces beyond an individual's control and *(c)* may force individual's to behave in a way incongruous to their conscious wishes. Therefore people are viewed as passive recipients of their involuntary emotions rather than active creators of the emotional experience. This perspective continues throughout many contemporary theories (for instance Frijda (1988) who stated that emotions are "not of a voluntary nature . . . and are only partially under voluntary control . . . [and even that] . . . we are subject to our emotions . . . [and].. . can not engender emotions at will", p.349).

2.3 PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF EMOTION

From the hydraulic viewpoint the majority of psychological theories of emotion have evolved (whilst not necessarily remaining true to its theory). Broadly understood, psychological theories of emotion can be broken into five categories: phenomenological, psychoanalytical, behavioural, cognitive and cognitive-behavioural.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL THEORIES OF EMOTION

Phenomenological theories argue that as they are dealing with feelings in humankind , a unique species, (humans have consciousness, and are assumed to practise free will whereas other animals are not [Giorgi, 1970]), that the focus of psychological investigation into emotions should be directed towards understanding the importance of an individual's conscious and immediate experience of feeling. For a phenomenologist the act of experiencing an emotion can not merely be broken down, and explained in terms of elements of feelings, behaviours, cognitions and so on, instead, a person's experience of the emotion is seen to be highly subjective and unique, compromising of a sense of wholeness or completeness, that can not be described when we look at the emotion's constructs. Phenomenologically, an emotion is a function of the whole person and is seen to have a purpose which originates from the 'essential' person (Husserl, 1913, cited in Strongman, 1987). An individual is assumed to view the world in a highly individualistic way (even though we may have components in common with others) and to behave in a way dependent on our perceptions and experiences.

Concerns have been raised regarding the so-called looseness of phenomenological measurements and research methodologies; for instance phenomenology, dealing with the highly subjective experience relies solely on self-report data of an individual's experiences of a situation; Leventhal (1980 cited in Biaggio and Godwin, 1987), for instance, saw anger as a subjective perceptual experience. The sole reliance on subjective reporting is obviously open to manipulation (say by an over zealous researcher). Phenomenological research depends generally on 'gut level', intuitive, non-quantifiable data (Strongman, 1987). As such, phenomenological theories been criticised for their inability to adequately explain in empirical terms how emotions function.

PSYCHOANALYTICAL

The psychoanalytical perspective portrays emotions as drive-related. Two aspects of psychoanalytical theory have had important contributions for how we view anger today;

1. The concept of a death instinct. Freud (1924) postulated the *dual-instinct* theory which argued that the life instinct (an underlying sexual drive) sought to perpetuate life, whereas the death instinct (which encompasses the aggressive drive), sought a return to inorganic matter. In order to combat anxiety and psychopathology, the death instinct in the form of self-destructive feelings, is redirected outwards as aggression. As contemporary society views destructive behaviour as unacceptable aggressive feelings may also be turned inwards; suppressed anger is postulated to play an aetiological role in the development of depression (e.g., Alexander & French, 1945).

2. Conceptions of emotional development and impulse control. Psychoanalysts view anger as arising in conjunction with the thwarting of ones wants and desires. Conceptually therefore anger is associated with developmental stages; for instance, during childhood the toddler comes to terms with ego impulses and learns to control his or her behaviour that may derive from being restricted.

The consequence of psychoanalytical theory was the development within psychotherapy of the belief that the 'therapeutic' way of dealing with anger was to "let it all out". The outward expression of anger through catharsis was seen as both beneficial and adaptive. For instance, Dollard (1944) states that "the occurrence of any act of aggression is assumed to reduce the instigation to aggression" (p.50). This widely held belief that the release, or expression, of internal tension will lead to a reduction of the tension, thereby reducing the probability of future aggression, emphasises the view of therapy as a mode where an individual can unblock dammed-up emotions. However as will be investigated later, the problem appears to be "getting couples not to express anger, but to shut-up long enough to listen to each other" (Tavris, 1982, p.12).

Incidentally, it is Freudian psychology's tendency to view aggression as an innate drive which has meant that the majority of subsequent research into anger has focused almost solely on the aggressive behavioural component of anger, rather than allowing for a consideration of affectual or cognitive elements.

BEHAVIOURAL THEORIES OF ANGER

Behavioural explanations of emotions focus solely on observable and measurable behaviour. These theories view emotions as deriving form the past schedules of operant reinforcement and respondent conditioning of an individual's behaviour. Behavioural theories hold that emotions are learned responses to environmental stimuli (Skinner, 1953), that emotional expression is learned through the process of observation and imitation of adult behaviour (Bandura, 1977), that the behaviours that are rewarded are most likely to be repeated (Thorndike, 1932), and that emotions result from the conditioning of an emotional response (e.g., Watson, 1929). As such, emotions are viewed as a means for ensuring survival and adaptation to the environment. However, a behavioural theory, per se, of emotion specifically has not been put forward. Rather theoretical contributions to the emotional debate have been made in a piecemeal fashion (Strongman, 1987), in part because traditionally, behaviourism has maintained a strictly empirical approach to the investigation of observable emotional experience, whereas, even if only intuitively accepted, emotions are viewed as more than mere behaviour.

Anger has been studied behaviourally in two ways, (neither of which concentrates solely on the emotion itself);

1. AS A SECONDARY FEATURE OF AGGRESSION. Behaviourally, anger is conceived as the arousal state that preconditions the organism to aggressive behaviour. Most behavioural work has viewed anger as an instigation for aggression or seen anger as mediating the frustration-aggression hypothesis (Berkowitz, 1962). The frustration hypothesis arose from

early 1930's research which viewed anger as related to the aggression. Anger was viewed as an individual's response to a blocked goal. This however fails to account for situations where frustration does not lead to aggression, or where there are intervening variables (Thomas, 1990).

2. AS A DISCRETE EMOTION. Behaviourists have studied specific emotions, for instance, anxiety (Hearst, 1969), elation (Strongman, Wookey, & Remington (1971) and anger (Millenson, 1967) (cited in Strongman, 1987). Millenson viewed anger as being one of three primary tendencies to emotional action an individual has which varies in intensity over time. According to this view anger facilitated operant behaviour and led to increased probabilities of attack and destruction.

COGNITIVE THEORIES OF ANGER

The basic tenet of cognitive theories is that there is "an essential interaction between the way people feel and behave and the way they construe the world, themselves, and their future" (Reeder, 1991, p.147). This is supported by research which indicates that a significant relationship between cognitions and anger exists [Mizes et al., 1990]). Three aspects of how cognitions affect our emotions will be considered here;

1. BECK Beck (1976) hypothesised the existence of three cognitive factors in emotions: the cognitive triad, schema and cognitive distortions. Whilst initially developed in an attempt to understand depressed thinking, the cognitive triad can be applied to angry thought processes. For instance, angry individuals with a negative cognitive triad, would hold predominantly idiosyncratic and negative views of the self, the world and the future. So too, do schema, or the underlying assumptions about life, tend to uphold any angry beliefs and feelings. Finally, cognitive distortions in the way the environment is interpreted can lead to an increase in the levels and frequency of angry feelings. Beck proposed that beliefs and self-statements mediate between an environmental event and a persons emotional response.

The arousal to anger therefore is mediated by a perceived assault on one's values or morals (the degree of anger being proportional to the appraised degree of the offence).

2. LAZARUS. Lazarus (1977) states that emotions can not be understood, or even researched, without asking about the cognitive factors which underlie emotional reactions. He focuses on the psychological stress aspects of emotions; emphasising the role of cognitive appraisal of a situation in determining emotionality (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Cognitive appraisals dictate both the emotional and the coping response an individual will make to an event.

3. ATTRIBUTION THEORIES. Weiner (1982) proposed that the causality of harm is the main determinant of emotional behaviour. Anger may be characterised by situations that are defined as more controllable by the harm doer. Controllability relates to the individual's perception that their intentions are justifiable. The perception of control when we are angry may have a significant influence on how we respond to anger , and even how we feel when angry (for instance, "there is nothing I can do to change this situation . . . I feel so helpless").

COGNITIVE-BEHAVIOURAL THEORIES OF EMOTIONS

Following criticism that behavioural theories have ignored or dismissed the role of cognitions in emotional experience, and vice versa, the growing recognition that one may not be entirely exclusive of the other has led to attempts to formulate a cognitive-behavioural theory of emotion.

1. STIMULUS-LINKED MODEL OF EMOTION. Fesbach (1986) put forward the stimulus-linked model which posits that anger results from frustration produced by mediating cognitive processes, and that anger is more likely following exposure to a noxious event if certain cognitions occur (e.g., the perception that the provoker acted purposely, or that the provocation was unjustified).

2. NOVACO. Novaco (1979) developed a theory of anger arousal that incorporated both cognitive and behavioural elements. He proposed that events are perceived as aversive on the basis of the expectations the individual has of an event, as well as their interpretation of

the event's meaning. Thus, when events are interpreted as frustrating, insulting, or threatening or, when an outcome is perceived as unexpected or unjustified, anger will result. For Novaco, the appraisal of an event as anger provoking is highly individualistic; the conclusion that a situation will cause anger does not depend on the situation but rather the difference between the individual's perceptions and emotional outcomes of the situation. The perceived magnitude of the difference between one's expectations and the outcome is determinant in the level of anger arousal and severity of any consequential behaviour.

PROBLEMS WITH THESE THEORIES

The majority of theories of anger have been generated through clinical practice. However, the nature of the therapist is such that the majority, or all, of his/her time, is spent working with individuals who suffer, in one form or another, from a psychological dysfunction; as is evident through the client initially seeking help. Whilst much of value may have derived from these studies, theorists in general do not bother to offer a disclaimer that perhaps these theories are more applicable to clients seeking therapy than to people in general.

Thus whilst there may have been a plentiful amount of empirical research investigating the development of emotions in general and as a result there have been a number of well-established theories of emotional development, there has been a lack of investigation into how anger as an emotional construct develops, and a paucity of research which provide support for these (Gurman & Kniskern, 1981). Any research into anger that has been carried out tends to have been laboratory-based (Biaggio & Godwin, 1987). Again, drawing conclusions between a structured, non-naturalistic environment and real-life situations may be self-limiting. Laboratory research has focused on anger as a transient emotion, and tended to look at the environmental stimuli, and situational events that have elicited aggression, rather than anger per se. Further, studies which have investigated anger, rather than looking at interpersonal aspects, have tended to concentrate on the intrapersonal experiences of anger.

Furthermore, the above theories, which seek to exclude relevant and salient aspects of the emotion, are limited in their applicability or generalisabilty. By-in-large, behavioural theories have tended to be *post hoc*, thus allowing only for a description of observable events, rather than actually generating any plausible explanation. Cognitive theories on the other hand have tended to focus either on a general emotional structure rather than anger specifically, serving to underscore cognitive appraisals which may differentiate emotions (Ben-Zur & Breznitz, 1991). The cognitive research that has focused on anger tends to be most concerned with individual differences (e.g., Biaggio, 1980; Speilberger, Jacobs, Russell & Crane, 1983) or with the investigation of certain variables with reference to their effect only on this specific emotion (e.g., Averill, 1982; 1983).

Thus, a need exists for the direction of the causality between cognitions, behaviour and anger arousal to be further researched and fully investigated; for instance, it could be that the correlation between anger and negative cognitions represents nothing more than a tendency of people with general negative affect to report global cognitive distortion. Research needs to determine the interpersonal and intrapersonal consequences of both the expression, or lack thereof, of anger. There is a need to systematically and independently investigate the influence of several event dimensions of anger (Ben-Zuhr & Breznitz, 1991). It is hoped that by taking a somewhat more encompassing and naturalistic view the complexity of anger and its effects on relationships can be highlighted. As such a social constructivist view of emotions has been adopted herein.

3.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

When considering emotions two important questions are:

1. What are emotions? that is, what is their nature? and,

2. What purpose, or function, do emotions serve?

If we are to believe those who advocate the idea of discrete emotions (e.g., Izard, 1977) every emotion is distinct in form, and by implication, in purpose. However, many emotions are highly complex, and although they may initially appear discrete, as in social talk such as "I am angry", or, " I am happy", they have in reality a number of various emotional, cognitive, physiological and behavioural components. Thus, the expression of anger may be accompanied by behaviours or feelings which are apparently identified with other emotive states, for instance, "I am so angry I could cry". Finding the answers to the first question (what are emotions?) is largely determined by the experiential nature of the emotion, whereas fathoming their purpose and effects (both positively and negatively) is far more complex.

Research on emotions was very sparse until the appearance of the work of Darwin (1872/1965) and James (1890) in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Criticism has been levelled at their theorising which has tended to be from a reductionist and psycho-evolutionary perspective, concentrating on the biological aspects of emotions, viewing emotions as involuntary and wholly affective states (Harre, 1986) or as remnants of our phylogenetic past (Averill, 1982). As such, emotions were viewed as being organised by, and explained using underlying biological principles.

Thus recent thought has recognised that psychologists' reliance on the empirical sciences' drive for parsimony has meant psychologists may have tended to ignore the very phenomena they wish to explain (Averill, 1982). And that through the study of one emotion at a time in detail we may indeed gain a fuller understanding of emotional processes in general (Novaco, 1979). Through the broadening of our understanding of the nature and function of emotions (how they affect our interactions and the roles of specific emotions or emotional syndromes) emotion research and theorising has recently concentrated on the behavioural and intrapsychic aspects of emotions. As such, during the last three decades researchers have again turned to the some of the Aristotelian ideas concerning the possibility of a cognitive factor operating within emotive functioning.

This aside, much of the research completed over the past 30 years has focused on the negative aspects of emotion; anger has been studied in relation to violence, and sadness to grief. Thus, the psychopathology of emotions has been at the forefront of research into anger-related issues and it has been driven by a disease model (the theoretical viewpoint which has investigated and focused on the negative, psychopathological 'problems' associated with anger) rather than a constructive approach.

Over time it has become apparent that it is best to attempt an understanding of emotions by taking a multi disciplinary approach. It has become acknowledged that it is hard to examine emotions one-at-a-time; "emotions are complex, intertwined, and difficult to delineate, many emotions being overlaid one upon another in the same situation. In addition we find the same emotion in many different situations, situations which are superficially very different but which elicit the same emotion in intelligible ways." (Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault & Benton, 1990). The implicit assumption of such an assertion is that emotions do not occur in a psychological vacuum but are influenced heavily by historical, social and cultural factors, as well as being individually directed. Thus whilst to some psychologists emotions are indeed psychological phenomena (Strongman, 1990) it is in psychologists' best interests to study and explain emotions based on a diverse variety of disciplines. Thus work by psychiatrists (De

Sousa, 1987), anthropologists (Levy & Walenkamp, 1989), historians (Stearns, 1989), and sociobiologists (Wagner & Manstead, 1989) are considered by psychologists in order to broaden our understanding.

The implicit assumption behind such an interdisciplinary approach is that emotions do not occur in a vacuum but within a social, historical, and even a biological context. A growing awareness that a society's rules regarding anger expression are not arbitrary they evolve hand-in-hand with its history and structure (Tavris, 1982) has led to the development of the notion of a socially constructed theory of emotional functioning.

It is to this theory with regard to an attempt to explain the experience of anger from a familial setti ng that this thesis turns, understanding that the social perspective attempts to explain the anger far better than a reductionist analysis which concentrates on anger's biology or its' inner psychological workings. Rather than implying that these approaches are wrong it merely acknowledges that they are insufficient (Tavris, 1982). Thus to try and explain anger (and indeed all emotions) without regard to social rules of containment and expression is to only look at part of the emotion. Anger, as an emotion, helps to regulate our everyday social relations including family disputes and the role of anger as a constructive component of family functioning has been generally neglected, even though "a major function of anger is to maintain the social order" (Tavris, 1982, p.65).

3.1 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF EMOTION

The social constructivist perspective of emotion has arisen out of an unease amongst emotion theorists about the plausibility of the biological theory of emotion. Whilst in general psychological investigations have tended to study private processes (Morss, 1988), where the focus of the research has tended to be subjectivist and individualist (Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn & Walkerdine, 1984), social constructivists argue for an approach based on the notion that an emotion itself is a socially formed concept. Thus it views the development of emotions as largely social, or environmental, phenomena, the result of nurture, not nature (Strongman, 1990). Evidence exists to support the view that, rather than acting in a biologically determined way, humans from birth onwards act, respond, and think in a highly social way (Bower, 1982; Butterworth, Henshall, Johnston, Abd-Fattah & Hopkins, 1985; Meltzoff and Moore, 1977).

The social constructivist perspective has been defined by both rigid and very loose empirically based experimentation as well as a number of qualitative investigations. The social constructivist view therefore encompasses a wide range of methodological perspectives. Social researchers concentrate on how people report emotional experiences and the explanations they generate for these. Thus the analyses tend to be largely phenomenological in nature. Research varies in focus from the duration of the emotion (eg. Frijda, Mesquita, Sonnemans & Van Goosen, 1991), the qualitative aspects of the emotion (eg. de Rivera, 1977), to the external or social aspects of emotion (e.g., Averill, 1982). As suggested previously, the wider the boundaries of our research protocols, the more applicable are the findings to our everyday lives, and the more valuable the research is both in practical terms and in widening our knowledge of emotions.

Whilst there is great variation in how social phenomena are used to explain emotion, this thesis will concentrate on one particular theoretical perspective, that of a social constructivist's view of emotions. This is the view from which Averill, investigated everyday experiences of

anger and aggression. Averill (1980a; 1980b; 1982; 1983) has provided an explanation for how emotions are constructed and regulated socially.

Traditional theories of emotion are based on the premise that the fundamental aspect of an emotion is the physiological experience; Woodworth (1922 cited in Crawford et al., 1990) defines emotions as a "moved" or stirred up state of the organism. Whilst traditional theories accept that we learn socially how to label the physiological events as specific emotions, social constructivism takes this notion a step further. Social constructivism regards these affective and cognitive components and behavioural enactments of social roles as only part of the emotion (Averill, 1982). Emotions are constituted in our efforts to make our own and others' actions intelligible (Crawford et al., 1990). As such intersubjectivitiy is an important concept to social constructivism; it refers to that aspect of human communication which arises out of common experience. It is possible for us to communicate with each other about how we feel because we are social beings. Emotions are constituted in our appraisal and evaluation of occurrences and events and others' actions as well as our own enactment of the socially appropriate behaviour. They both express and communicate our reflected experience of making sense of our world and ourselves.

Averill (1982) views anger as a socially constituted syndrome, or a transitory social role governed by social rules. His constructivist viewpoint emphasises the idea that it is the meaning and function of emotions that is important. Functions and meanings are determined by the social systems in which they occur and of which they are an integral part. It is the question of how anger may be socially constructed within the family that this thesis attempts to unravel.

3.2 WHAT IS AN EMOTION?

Emotions are socially constructed, something that happens to you rather than something you do. As such emotions may be interpreted as passions rather than actions. Whilst an action is both conscious and deliberate, an emotion in the generic sense is something people suffer (Averill, 1982). This idea of emotions being something we are subjected to passively is a fairly widespread, commonly held belief. 'Passions' are determined by physiological, psychological and social imperatives and by the conflict that may arise between the impulse to respond to one of these factors.

One of the main criticisms of theories attempting to explain emotions is that inadequacies come about through attempts at obtaining parsimony. However, attempting to explain emotive episodes, feelings, thoughts as discrete entities is futile because emotions, such as anger, have a number of components to them. These components may or may not be present in each "angry episode". The most important of these components is the context within which the 'anger' occurs; the social origins and social functions of the emotion are the focal point. Thus an approach is needed which better seeks to explain the emotion in terms of the context within which it occurs. Such an approach is that of social constructivism where emphasis resides with the social origins and social functions of the emotion.

Instead of referring to 'an' emotion, a social constructivist talks of 'emotional syndromes' (a broad group of behaviours from which one, some, or all may when expressed together, be labelled as a particular emotion). Emotional syndromes exist within a hierarchy of behavioural systems, constructed of, or, by:

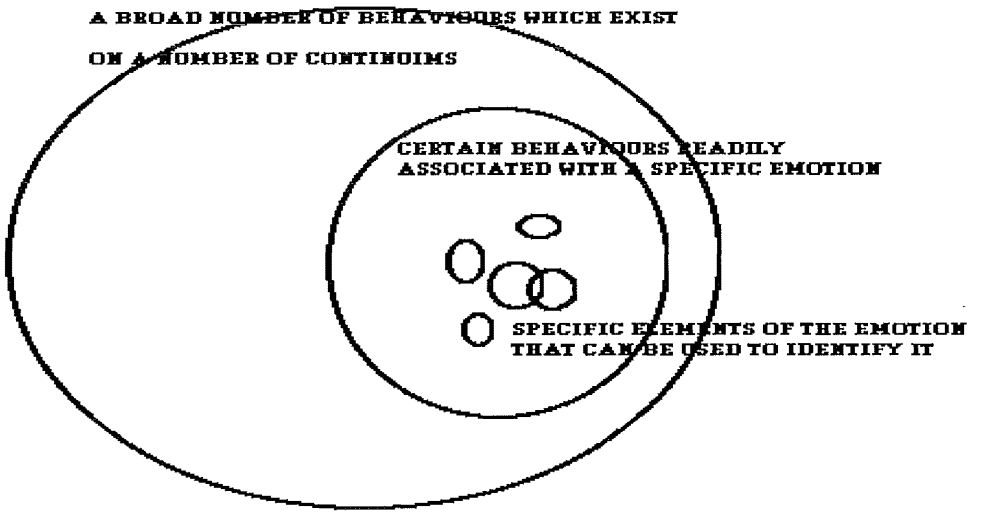
1. LEVELS OF ORGANISATION Emotions are sub-systems of behaviour which can be broken down into specific elements, e.g., physiological, cognitive, behavioural, etc. Each subsystem (or emotion) has a specific level of complexity and its boundaries can be highly inclusive, or, highly exclusive.

2. LEVELS OF ANALYSIS Human behaviour is generally analysed on three levels; the "body, psyche and society" (Kemper, 1991, p. 302), that is, the biological, psychological, and sociocultural. Any system is influenced by all three levels. These 3 levels of analysis involve the description of the principles by which a behavioural system is organised.

The picture becomes more complex when we consider that an emotion is not likely to exist discretely; behavioural, physiological and cognitive components of one emotional syndrome may be readily observable in another. For instance, we can feel "all hot" when we are angry as well as when we are embarrassed. Thus an emotion is assigned to a category as part of a continuum rather than being mutually exclusive. The borders between the categories are vague rather than clear-cut and all categories will overlap to some degree (Russell, 1994).

Diagrammatically we can depict an emotion thus:

FIGURE 1: DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF EMOTIONS



Averill (1980a, 1980b) advocating this view of emotions as socially constructed entities, formulated a working definition of emotions as behavioural syndromes, or transitory social roles. Specifically, emotions may be defined as socially constituted syndromes or transitory

social roles which include an individual's appraisal of situations and which are interpreted as passions rather than actions.

If we are to adopt this view of emotions as transitory social roles it becomes apparent that emotions are neither discrete nor independent: similar responses occur in various emotions such that no simple behavioural response or set of responses, is required for the attribution of an emotional state. Emotions become social labels for fleeting or temporary social roles. The labelling of a group of behaviours, thoughts and attitudes as an emotion is based on the principle that language is a public phenomenon (Wittgenstein, 1953, p. 329). It is, therefore, imperative when attempting to identify emotions and motivations for action that we focus our attention on the prior incidents, or previous social transactions, of the behaviour (Kemper, 1991). The type of discourse that is used to describe behaviours and thoughts is dependent on both the situation within which they occur and the individual's past language development.

An emotional syndrome is the enactment of the transitory social role. Emotions are displayed according to the social and cultural environment with which the individual identifies. Whilst the individual may not consciously be aware of the social roles, he or she will tend to enact them according to social expectation, and in doing so believing wholly in their response (Averill, 1982).

Whilst this view of social emotional behaviour appears to be weighted heavily in favour of environmental behaviourism, it is not necessarily so. The socially constructed theory of emotions means that not all behaviours can be easily conceptualised in terms of specific social roles, rather, it accommodates idiosyncratic action, or, action, by the individual that is not dictated by the social aspects of a situation. It is a view which maintains that the majority of social behaviour can be defined in such terms.

Indeed in order for behaviour to be accredited as a social role three requirements must be filled (Averill, 1982):

1. The behaviour must be meaningful in terms of the social expectations or rules of conduct within which the individual lives or identifies.
2. The individual must attempt to fulfil these expectations (consciously or otherwise) by behaving in certain, socially acceptable or expected ways, and,
3. It is assumed that other individuals would be capable of, and would in fact behave in similar ways, according to the nature of the role.

Thus emotions are communicated as well as experienced within the social act; it is within the confines of social acts that emotions more often than not exist and manifest themselves. Social acts occur within ongoing social relationships and emotions are therefore brought to play within these social acts. As such, emotions are subject to systematic and intentional transformational processes. We experience and witness emotions through sideways glances, changes in tone, movement, restlessness, etc. These behavioural gestures are the means through which we put emotions into practice and these gestures are recognised and interpreted by both others and ourselves. Emotions are subject to ordering rules embedded in social circles and communities and are generally followed by the communities to varying degrees. When we violate these rules we try to provide justifiable accounts for why we did what we did so that our self remains intact and our social relationships remain unjeopardised.

3.3 THE FUNCTION OF EMOTIONS

By increasing our understanding of emotions we will be in a better position to speculate about the course of development of pathological emotions, and to undertake modification of inappropriate emotional experiences, cognitions or behaviour. Thus, how emotions work, their role, and the influence on our everyday interactions is important in furthering our understanding of human relations. Emotions serve the individual in an invaluable way: they allow him/her to respond to environmental, or social, situations in an appropriate way. Whilst individual responding may seem to be largely an intrapsychic phenomenon, the way an individual will respond is in fact determined by social rules regarding acceptable and unacceptable emotional responding.

The functions, or rules which govern emotional behaviour are unconsciously present in our society. Thus, emotions are viewed as socially constituted syndromes whose meaning and function is determined primarily by the social environment. Anger is representative of the class of conflictive emotions, conflict the individual feels as a result of social pressures placed upon him/her. As individuals we are constantly monitoring other peoples behaviour, looking to the situation to give us clues regarding the appropriateness of their actions. Thus it is relatively easy to point to instances of when the procedural rules regarding emotional expression and experience have been broken as when someone appears 'neurotic' or 'hysterical'.

Social roles may be enacted with varying degrees of individual involvement. At low levels of involvement the individual is merely 'going through the moves'; behaviour is highly instrumental and may be viewed as a formality. As the level of involvement increases, there is an increase in the number of aspects of the emotional syndrome 'activated'. For instance, physiological arousal may accompany action and expressive reactions are more likely to occur. At the highest level of involvement the expressive behaviour becomes highly stereotypical and independent of any constraints the situation may be placing on the individual;

that is, when we are so intensely emotional we ignore the rules regarding emotional expression, as for example, having an argument with your spouse at a friend's dinner party. Generally everyday emotional episodes occur at low-to-moderate levels of involvement and may be viewed as largely instrumental in nature. However, whilst involvement levels may differ, the associated meaning of the behaviour is unlikely to for either the individual or any person interpreting the behaviour.

Whilst rules regarding emotional feeling and expression may be broken, or only partially broken, they are generally recognised and tend to acquire meaning with regard to specific emotions. Thus, emotions are not just interpreted, they are viewed by relating the personal intrapsychic experience to the situation, and as such are viewed as something. The 'something' is the meaning of the emotion. For instance, Averill (1982) states that "to understand the meaning of the emotion is to understand the relevant aspects of the sociocultural system of which the emotion is part" (p.24). Understanding an emotion is largely intuitive in nature, however much of the knowledge and many of the cues regarding emotion are inherently embedded in our language. Thus language becomes the socially constructed, socially determining, tool. There is a close relationship between labelling an emotional state and the experience of the emotion (e.g., Scherer, 1982). Thus when we know the meaning of an emotional concept we are also cued as to the appropriate rules which apply to that emotion.

It is postulated then that a person has not only the right but in some cases even the obligation, to feel a certain way in appropriate circumstances (Averill, 1982). Monitoring of behaviour, cognitions, attitudes in relation to the social environment occurs via four broad rules which are largely social in origin;

1. Rules of appraisal help determine the intentional object of the emotion. Emotions include the individual's appraisal of a situation. Whilst behavioural responses may have underlying physiological mechanisms emotional appraisals constitute the individual's explanations of a situation and as such are highly cognitive

and regulative in nature. Emotions may be seen to be judgements about the external environment and less like a drive state, that is, we can not just "be angry," anger must have an object "I am angry at . . . ". Rather than viewing emotions as pure judgements (for example, Solomon (1976) and the Greek and Roman Stoics) the socially constructivist approach views appraisal as one important component of emotional being. Certain emotions are likely to have specific and identifying objects, its own characteristic behaviours which serve as an guide to identifying the emotional episode.

2. Rules of behaviour give feedback from the expressive and physiological responses to the emotion. As such, emotions are procedural. Emotions as socially constructed syndromes means that no single response is a necessary or sufficient condition for the attribution of emotion.

3. Rules of attribution determine whether a response will be classified as either a passion or an action. Attribution rules are tied closely to issues of social desirability as well as to a person's perception of themselves (as such undesirable responses tend to be classified as a passion).

4. The rules of prognostication dictate the duration of an emotional episode. Each emotion is thought to have a characteristic time course (for example, we talk of people having grieved for too long, [or, not long enough!] following the death of a spouse). The length of an emotion is determined by both immediate feedback and anticipation of future events.

Therefore emotional functioning is an adaptive process by the individual, and his/her community, to a specific historical environment which may be beneficial, noxious or just contribute to its maintenance (Kemper, 1991). The normative function of emotions means that we are able to alter our emotions to mirror the prevailing order. By regulating our emotions based on social determinants there is a degree of uniformity to emotional presentation. The functions of emotions may change over long periods of time (Kemper, 1991). As new ideas and practices become evident in our cultures they put pressure on the

emotional expressions we use to change. As such, the old modes of social expression are thought of as 'out-dated' and, perhaps, even dysfunctional.

3.4 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST ASSUMPTIONS

ON THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE

> *"The language [that] we use to communicate about an emotion epitomises the meaning of an emotional role" (Averill, 1982, p.64).*

Before attempting to investigate further the role of the specific set of behaviours and attitudes we classify as anger within the familial context, it would be pertinent to turn our attention to the problematic issue of language. Strongman (1990) notes that social researchers focus on a unique phenomenon in humans which biological researchers are not able to tap in their interspecies research. This is the phenomenon of language.

Social constructivists view language as nothing more than a representation of a concept, an ontological illusion. As Wittgenstein states "when I think in language there aren't 'meanings' going through my mind in addition to the verbal expressions . . . the language itself is the vehicle of thought" (Wittgenstein, 1953, p.329). Thus discourse itself is something constructed by the social environment in order to serve social needs. The type of discourse that is used to describe behaviours and thoughts is dependent on the situation within which they occur. As such, our personal experiences of anger are highly interwoven with our methods of discourse as is any investigation into the role of anger in the family. It is important we are aware that we are severely limited in our abilities to define, describe and explain emotions. Our boundaries are our linguistic resources and are self-limiting in a number of ways.

It is important to consider the role of language in an attempt to unravel the workings of anger in the family; most importantly as language is intricately involved in anger experiences in (at least) two ways; language is the how of communication. When we are angry we communicate (be it yelling and screaming or through calm discussion) via language heavily couched in emotional meanings. So too, do we remember, construct and reconstruct our familial shared history via language; that is how we remember an event is less an example of accuracy of memory but rather an example of how emotionally charged language is used to describe perceived events significant to a family, or family member.

THE SELF AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Social constructivism per se, does not allow for the existence of any private or contemplative thought. There is no such thing as a private world; all emotions are formed by, and operate to serve social requirements. As such any mental process is merely viewed as a social process that we are completing in our heads. The concept or understanding we have of ourselves has been created through social processes, specifically language. As suggested above, our consciousness is a social construction rather than an existential 'thing'. The self is constituted and reconstituted by signs in ongoing processes.

This view that the 'self' is a fundamentally public, or, social entity is not new (Mead, 1934; Baldwin, 1897). A social constructivist approach therefore does not give much credence to the notion of private lives as distinct from public life; any distinction or perceived difference is a result of our beliefs and actions (Morss, 1988); beliefs and attitudes that are formed and accepted are done so socially. Private worlds exist only because we construct them. For instance, there is no essential difference between the workplace and home apart from differences we create, differences in our attitudes towards, and behaviour in these environments. Via internalisation (the process of taking in highly abstract rule systems [Reber, 1988]) the individual constructs a private world (Vygotsky, 1962). (This perspective is in direct contrast to the reductionist, and even some cognitive theories which view emotions as

capable of influencing thought, language and culture, but do not see emotions as dependent on these factors.)

3.5 COMPONENTS OF ANGER

The view taken within this thesis is that of a social constructivist approach whereby all emotional syndromes are classified by a number of behaviours which tend to be classed together as a transitory emotional syndrome (in this case, more-often-than-not, conflictual). The three main components of a transitory social role are the social, the psychological, and the physiological.

3.6 SOCIOLOGICAL COMPONENTS OF ANGER

It is imperative that when providing an explanation of anger as a social role we turn to issues relating to the individual's experience within a social environment. The sociological components of anger include the present day social perspective (the widely held beliefs and attitudes towards anger), the historical view of anger, as well as any cultural variants.

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE OF ANGER

Little research has been carried out investigating the sociological components of anger. Averill (1982) is one of the few researchers who has looked at the 'everyday experience' of anger in both men and women selected from a community sample. By doing so he allowed for the influence of sociological factors on his sample, (as well as controlling for the highly sterile environment of the laboratory and the usual well-educated university population).

Thomas (1989) found that men and women with a lower educational level had higher rates of physical anger symptoms (e.g., they were more likely to smoke, or, suffer from weight

problems) than did higher educated men and women. She postulated that this may be because unknowingly we are teaching our children social coping skills and personal coping skills during their years at school, and that the child's ability to cope with and express anger is a function of his/her knowledge of these coping processes. According to this the hypothesised accumulation of knowledge regarding coping strategies for anger would have a cumulative effect; for example tertiary and higher secondary education emphasise the development of rationale, of generating reasonable arguments instead of emotional outpourings as well as nurturing a tolerance to other ideas or perspectives.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF ANGER

As noted previously, historically laboratory and field studies have focused on the overt aspects of anger, more especially aggression, violence and abuse. However, the last decade has been highlighted by an increased interest in anger and an increased awareness of the importance of studying anger from a subjective or phenomenological perspective. This is reflected in research on individual differences in anger-proneness (e.g., Biaggio, 1980; Speilberger et al., 1983) and on research into observed or attributed characteristics of situations which effect anger (e.g., Averill, 1982; Ferguson & Rule, 1983).

Around the time of Freud, the Western view of anger began to change. Anger was viewed as an instinctual drive and the full expression of it, in order to prevent illness, was encouraged. Over time, therefore it is reasonable to assume that the way anger, and angry behaviour, is viewed (and maybe even expressed) has changed. Thomas (1990) and Stearns and Stearns (1986) reviewed historical conceptualisations of anger. Both concluded that anger has historically been regarded as a sin, a weakness, or a madness. The ability to restrain this emotion was a sign of a reasonable, sane and civilised person. For over 200 years anger has been predominantly viewed as a negative emotion which had to be controlled.

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE OF ANGER

Crawford et al., (1990) maintain that what individuals feel to be appropriate to and useful for their personal needs is pregiven in the form of dominant cultural values . The basic tenet of the social constructivist approach is that emotions may only be fully understood if we consider the cultural context of the individual. As such social constructivism attempts to account for both the cultural diversity and cognitive differentiation within emotions.

Whilst it is commonly stated that certain facial expressions of anger are universally recognised and innate; for instance, Ekman (1972) found that anger was one of six emotions with identifiable facial expressions across cultures, this is only so if the definition of anger is extended to be so encompassing as to include all aspects of aggression (Averill, 1982). Further criticism of the many studies 'proving' the universality of emotions (such as the research by Ekman (1972) and Izard (1971)) relate to the point that cultural similarities in labelling emotions is quite different from cultural identification of emotional concepts (Russell, 1989). If social constructivists argue that emotions are socially determined, we would expect to find that some emotions, or at least emotional expressions, are not universal. Indeed, cross-cultural studies indicate very clearly that what provokes anger, and, how anger is expressed is highly dependent on cultural constraints. In a detailed meta-analysis of aggression in 1010 societies, Rohner (1970) found that there was a correlation between gender and aggression (males were more aggressive than females with young males more so). Again, and more importantly perhaps, cultural influences were more important than biological influences in determining the general level of either gender's aggression.

With regard to aggression there have been some aggressive behaviours noted that are highly specific to certain cultures; Russell (1994) noted emotional behaviours which are quite culturally specific, for example, the *wild man* behaviour of the New Guineans and individual's running *amok* in centralised South East Asian societies. With regard to anger, cultures have been found which have entirely separate emotional syndromes from our own. For instance *To hu* which occurs amongst the Kaingang Indians of Brazil. It is an emotion best described

as "fear-anger"; one emotion with two facets (Averill, 1982). Likewise, the Japanese show very little anger or aggression socially but express many aggressive thoughts via the written word. Russell et al. (1993) found that Japanese men and women are not as competent at recognising posed anger expressions as are Western men and women. Anger is contrary to the Japanese ethic of avoiding conflict and seeking consensus through the sacrificing of the individual's needs for the groups interests.

Differences in the conceptualisation of anger within cultures may well be a reflection of the social organisation of each culture. Behaviours associated with emotions specific to certain cultures are accepted by that culture even if the behavioural display of the 'anger' is considered undesirable it is not altogether not expected; thus, running amok, which is identifiable by highly aggressive and destructive behaviour, an aggressive frenzy, is recognised, accepted and no recourse is expected of the individual in question by his/her society (Averill, 1982). However, such behaviour would be not only unacceptable but highly 'illegal' within Western society, incurring punishment and expected reparation. The meaning of the emotional role and the language used to describe it may give us valuable hints as to social appropriateness and acceptability specific to one cultural context. Indeed the word *emotion* itself seems to be culture bound. Russell et al., (1993) note that neither the Tahitians, the Ifalukians, nor the Samoans have a word equivalent for emotion.

It is highly likely that ethnic, racial and cultural factors will affect the way anger is expressed, for all emotion is visible within, and learned from within a cultural context. Thus during development we learn, and teach, what is considered an appropriate, or inappropriate, expression of anger within a New Zealand context. Our country is unique in that we place a high-profile and emphasis on bicultural issues; for instance, the media has recently highlighted the Justice System's consideration of allowing cultural norms of behaviour as a defence for crimes not accepted by the New Zealand Justice System. Regardless of the outcome of this debate, that New Zealand as a whole acknowledges and encourages differing cultural ideas, illustrates the unique environment within which we live. Considering anger from a multi-

cultural perspective is merely an extension of this view. However one needs to be careful as to how this question is addressed. Researchers (e.g., Bishop & Glynn, 1992) note that most research involving Maori and Pakeha has had belittling effects (e.g., oversimplifies Maori history, underestimates Maori learning processes) and that findings have not been shared with the appropriate groups (i.e., in small or individual settings) in an appropriate ways (i.e., through a mode of communication that is culturally appropriate). Thus the investigation of this issue requires more than an awareness of the potential differences, but also an undertaking, and/or level of cross-cultural competence.

How the Maori culture views the display of anger, which behaviours it labels as angry, and the solutions it generates for coping with angry feelings, may differ significantly from the Pakeha culture. For instance, the Maori appear to be more likely to utilise physical responses they labelled as 'angry' than Pakeha. A research project carried out by a post-graduate student at the University of Canterbury found that the Maori were significantly more likely to use physical punishment of their children's misbehaviour than were the Pakeha parents who tended to use words (describing what was wrong, explaining why it was wrong and what they expected from their children) (Kidd, 1992). Similarly, a Samoan agency in Auckland until recently was administering, what was viewed by many as excessive, levels of physical punishment to 'errant' adolescents; however for the Samoan elders, implementing the lesson to the adolescents was an application of the adage "spare the rod and spoil the child". Whilst these examples tend to focus on the aggressive rather than the anger experience, they are apt examples of cultural differences with regard to the 'conflictive emotions' which occur side-by-side in our society.

In fact the Maori may recognise and label facial emotions differently from Pakeha. In a study examining a cultural effect in the recognition of emotion, Mehta, Ward & Strongman (1992) found that Pakeha subjects were better able to recognise and label posed facial expressions than were Maori subjects. Further, there are some significant differences in the way Maori language is constructed and the common everyday colloquial English. For

instance the Maori identify a number of emotion words that have no equivalent in New Zealand English; emotional terms, such as whakama (associated with shame, self-abasement, excessive modesty, shyness, and withdrawal), are definitely culture-bound (Sachdev, 1990), and as such, illustrate that for the Maori, emotions can manifest themselves in ways significantly different from the predominant Pakeha culture. The outcomes of a differential understanding of emotions, and emotional constructs which have no equal may be further demonstrated through other terms for which English has no equivalent, for example, mana (tied fundamentally with the concept of power and influence), tapu and noa (concepts concerned with ritual, or religious, power). These concepts are of fundamental importance to the Maori culture (Sachdev, 1990).

3.7 PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPONENTS OF ANGER

Psychologically anger has a number of components. The two main factors are cognitive and behavioural.

COGNITIVE FACTORS OF ANGER

The analysis of anger from a cognitive perspective involves consideration of the locus of control, the function of appraisal and the individual's schemata and cognitive triad.

LOCUS OF CONTROL

The evolution of a theory of a Locus of Control (Rotter, 1973) within social psychology has provided some insight into the role of cognitions in anger arousal. While an internal locus of control (that is the belief that oneself is responsible for, and can influence, the course of everyday life) has been associated with an adaptive coping response (Strickland, 1989), an external locus of control (believing that control of one's own life lies outside one's self) may lead to a maladaptive coping strategy for anger. For instance, somatization (physical symptoms for which there are no apparent physical causes) which occurs more frequently in

those suffering frequent anger episodes may be the result of an external locus of control. Women and men who have a high number of physical anger symptoms have been demonstrated to have an external locus of control (Thomas, 1989). Somewhat not surprisingly, Thomas also found that those men and women who had more anger symptoms were less optimistic in nature. People who had lower levels of anger symptoms and higher levels of optimism were more likely to persistently work through problems and to find resolutions.

THE ROLE OF APPRAISAL IN ANGER

The claim has been made that cognitive appraisal plays a significant role in anger arousal. Fesbach (1986) contends that anger is the direct result of frustration produced through mediating cognitive processes. The stimulus-linked model of anger asserts that anger is most likely to occur when certain cognitive thoughts follow a noxious or provoking event. For instance: 1)the failure or inability to accept unfulfilled expectations (e.g., becoming angry at being turned down for a job promotion), 2) the preconception that the provoker of the anger acted with intent (e.g., "the waitress deliberately kept me waiting"), 3) believing an incident that provoked angry feelings was unjustified (for instance, "there was no need for him to think that was what I meant; I was saying something different"), and 4) anger arising from the attribution of a remark as being a direct attack on self-esteem, or as pointing out one's short-comings, (for instance, a rude remark about one's ability to listen to other people's problems). Thus the explanations one constructs regarding the degree of perceived intentionality in another's actions is crucial in determining whether anger arousal will result.

THE ROLE OF COGNITIVE SCHEMATA AND THE COGNITIVE TRIAD IN ANGER

Irrational cognitions or cognitive distortions, are positively correlated with instances of anger and anger-provoking episodes (Mizes et al., 1990). Mizes et al. found that anger is more likely to occur when an individual has prominent irrational beliefs. The desire for personal perfection, anxiousness, blame prone-ness, catastrophizing, projected misfortune, approval concerns and high-expectations have the strongest relationship to anger arousal

(Deffenbacher et al., 1986; Mizes et al., 1990) were the cognitive distortions most strongly related to anger.

BEHAVIOURAL OR OVERT FACTORS OF ANGER

MODES OF ANGER EXPRESSION

Anger may be expressed in a number of ways. Speilberger et al.'s (1985) State-Trait Inventory categorised people's angry behaviour according to two broad categories; "anger-in", and "anger-out". From these two modes derive all the various ways in which anger is experienced.

Anger-in includes the various ways in which the experience of anger occurs intrapyschically, but, the individual, for a number of reasons, chooses not to express their feelings externally. It is arguable that within relationships where the expression of anger is perhaps most threatening anger will not be expressed. Lerner (1985) points out that many people within intimate relationships may make the choice not to express anger so as to "keep-the-peace". She defines the 'peace-maker' as most frequently being a woman who will define her wishes as being the same as her spouse's wishes and preferences for her.

In those instances where anger is overtly acknowledged there are three main modes of expression (Hebb, 1972); direct confrontation (an expression of angry feelings), sulking, or temper tantrum (yelling, screaming, a general non-productive ventilation of feelings).

However, both the expression and the suppression of anger may have negative psychological consequences. The view that the behavioural expression of anger is both healthy and productive has been supported by numerous therapists who have counselled clients, community groups, and the general public to ventilate the expressions of anger rather than letting them 'fester inside'. Freud's work (1924) led other psychoanalysts to adopt the view of ventilation, whereby angry feelings are discharged to prevent physical or psychological

illness; for instance, Thomas (1992) notes that psychoanalytical therapy often involves clients being instructed to scold, insult, and scream at each other in order to release anger cathartically.

However, the cathartic perspective, utilised and expounded by many therapists, has been demonstrated to actually lead to an escalation of angry feelings, hostility and aggression (Baron, 1983). Any relief from anger, or aggression, is very brief in duration. Encouraging individuals to "let it all out" at their loved ones is likely to lead to feelings of hurt and retaliation. As such, ventilation may be neither appropriate nor helpful due to the likelihood that it will sustain the emotional experience. To Lerner (1985) ventilation may cause rigidification of intimate relationship patterns. Consequently much needed changes to the relationship are less likely to occur. Thus encouraging catharsis may in fact be adding to the destructive nature of a relationship already experiencing trouble, or even dysfunction. Tavris (1982) sums up the case against catharsis well . . . "'Letting off steam' is a wonderful metaphor . . . but people are not teapots" (p. 131).

Conversely it is possible to express anger in a way which may lead to healthy resolution, and even growth, within a relationship. The expression of angry feelings is likely to be constructive only if anger-release is used as a tool for reinterpretation, compromise, and/or restoration of self-esteem. That is, if it helps the individual to successfully cope with an anger-provoking event.

The individual's style or mode of expressing anger is most important in determining whether the expression of anger is either constructive or destructive. Constructive expression of anger involves a direct, genuine expression of feelings, where the individual clearly and fully communicates how they perceive an event, or conflict, and the effect it has had on them (Biaggio & Godwin,1987). The constructive resolution of anger is more than the mere expression by one individual of his/her true feelings; a reciprocal expression by the other

party/ies in the event, and an equal willingness to resolve and restore pre-event relationships or to move the relationships in an agreed upon direction, is also necessary (Patterson, 1982).

MODE OF ANGER EXPRESSION AND HEALTH ISSUES

Several behaviours which are deleterious to health have been associated with anger. The high intensity of angry feelings and anger expression has been linked with the acquisition of a smoking habit (Theorell & Lind, 1973; Srole, 1968), marital disagreement and dissatisfaction (Haynes, Levine, Scotch, Feinlab & Kannel, 1978), alcohol use and cigarette smoking (Shekelle, Gale, Ostfield & Paul, 1983), excessive or compulsive eating and lapses from dieting programs (Kagan, 1984) (cited in Thomas & Donnellon, 1990).

3. 8 PHYSIOLOGICAL COMPONENTS OF ANGER

Averill (1982) maintains that one advantage when considering the role of biology in emotions from a social constructivist perspective is that it allows for a consideration of biological factors without a need for "crude reductionism". Thus the role of physiological factors in the emotional experience and with emotion arousal has not been dismissed, but complemented; emotions are embodied and have physiological correlates.

PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES ASSOCIATED WITH ANGER

All emotions, not just anger, may alter our physiological functioning, most notably the autonomic, endocrinal and immunological functions (Schwartz, Weinberger & Singer, 1981). Angry feelings are often accompanied by changes in epinephrine and norepinephrine levels as well as rises in heart rate, cardiac output and peripheral vascular resistance (Schwartz et al., 1981). Feelings of anger are maintained physiologically; as our level of involvement in a social role increases our emotional response when provoked to anger is accompanied by an increasing level of physiological arousal.

Obviously emotions do have an associated physiology and as we can group emotional response and feelings associated with the label 'anger' so too can certain physiological changes be commonly associated with anger. When we become angry a number of significant physiological changes may occur. These tend to be related as well to our discourse; we describe feelings of anger as "making us all hot" or of being "so angry I was shaking". Physiologically anger tends to be associated with words suggesting a lack of control "I was so angry I didn't know what I was doing" or "I couldn't help myself I was so angry it just blurted out" et cetera.

HEALTH ISSUES RELATED TO ANGER PHYSIOLOGY

It has been postulated that the mode of anger expression, for instance, anger-in, or, anger-out (Speilberger et al., 1985) may influence the individual on both a physical as well as a psychological level. The physical symptom is dependent upon the mode of expression. Anger suppression (or anger-in) has been correlated to a significant increase in the incidence of higher systolic and distolic blood pressure (Gentry, Chesney, Gary, Hall & Harburg, 1982; Harburg, Erfut, Hauenstein, Chape, Schull & Schork, 1973) and tension headaches (Thomas, 1989), It may be precipitative in double the mortality rate of those who express their anger compared to people who suppress anger (Weder & Julius, 1985). The Framingham Study (Haynes, Feinab & Kennel, 1980) found that two of the strongest psychosocial factors that predicted cardiovascular heart disease in both men and women was suppressed hostility and Type A behaviour, both of which are characterised by behaviour that could be best described as 'angry'. Conversely the expression of anger (anger-out) has been correlated with both negative and positive outcomes; talking anger over calmly with a friend helps generate a healthy relationship but may also be detrimental to close relationships when expressed in a physically or verbally aggressive way (Thomas, 1989).

3.9 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM AND ANGER

Thus it becomes apparent that due to the multiplicity and heterogenous nature of anger and its manifestation within our culture it is especially pertinent to attempt to explain anger by means of a social constructivist approach.

Whilst the 13th century philosopher St. Thomas Aquinas proposed that the social status of the antagonist would determine whether an antagonist would indeed become angry and what the nature of the action would be, historically, anger has not been viewed as either a constructive or a socially based emotion. Sullivan (1953) was perhaps the first to emphasis the interpersonal nature of anger. Working from a psychoanalytical perspective Sullivan linked an individual's expectations of others and subsequent feelings of anxiety when those expectations weren't met with anger. Anger, and its concomitant of a sense of empowerment, served to ward off anxious feelings. More recently research of a social constructivist bent also supports the highly interpersonal nature of anger (Averill, 1982), and has been concerned with the context within which anger is experienced. Tavris (1982) proposes that angry episodes are social events that assume meaning only when we consider the social contract between the antagonists. This view therefore emphasises the notion that we function as social organisms within the community rather than as 'single biological units' (Morss, 1987).

THE RESEARCHER'S VIEWPOINT

To think of anger as a state or entity is not in keeping with the social constructivist viewpoint. Therefore, in order to study anger it is assumed that it is a necessity to also investigate the social and moral order within which the researcher is functioning. Thus, the study is of angry people and will investigate situations which provoke angry feelings instead of trying to tie down and label an abstract entity (Harre, 1986). However, the ability to study angry people and anger-provoking situations is limited by discourse (the symbolic

representation of the social and moral climate within which we live and think). When attempting to answer the question *"What is anger?"* the conclusions drawn will inevitably reflect the explanations and thinking of local culture (Harre, 1986). Thus it is more accurate to investigate how the word anger, and other related emotional expressions that cluster around 'anger', are used within our culture.

It is from this social constructivist theoretical backdrop that the researcher seeks to investigate and highlight the role of anger within New Zealand families. As such the analysis will be one where the *primary focus is the rules by which the emotional syndrome of anger is organised, and the function that anger fulfils within a familial context.* It is imperative that an explanation of how emotions manifest themselves within the family is considered alongside an explanation of how emotions are socialised. An understanding of these processes both enriches and aids understanding of the function of emotions in the family. When a socially constructivist view of emotions is adopted, anger no longer appears as a psychological disturbance or a 'negative' emotion, but rather, as a natural, functional product of our social systems. (It should, however, be noted that for some people anger is neither functional nor healthy.)

4.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTIONS

4.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING "WHAT IS ANGER?

Accepting angry feelings of both ourselves and significant others (e.g., spouses, parents and siblings), as well as learning to resolve anger episodes, is an important developmental task. Individual development is influenced by the functioning of the entire family system; thus what the child experiences will subsequently shape his/her development, is constructed conjointly with parents, and emerges from the processes which shape the family environment as a whole.

The importance placed on an angry feeling, the way it is dealt with, and how one learns to accept it, is a function of age and family. In addition the mere act of growing means individuals face many developmental tasks which create feelings of anger. For instance; developing from an egocentric toddler (the "terrible two's"), where concern is with immediate gratification of needs, may be characterised by anger and frustration. Similarly, adolescence can be a time of struggle; whereby the individual undergoes not only the metamorphosis from child-to-adult, but also faces the battle to be recognised and treated on equal terms in an adults' world. In the words of one adolescent, being a teenager means "you probably have a lot to be angry about" (cited in Laiken & Schneider, 1980, p.11). Even for adults, entering an intimate and permanent relationship may mean having to reformulate old patterns of how family anger is addressed.

Age is an influential factor in determining the experience of anger, and may be viewed as both an individual and a sociocultural variable (Torestad, 1990). Socioculturally age reflects the differences in historical and contemporary views of the world, individually, we may be shaped by specific experiences. Both have a tangible impact on emotional functioning

(Brody, 1988). As people age emotions are elicited by an increasing number of situations (Piaget, 1981). Similarly, how anger is displayed, and felt, is a function of age. How individuals learn what to feel, and where, has been hotly debated; there are numerous theories of development. The social constructivist view is one adopted herein and the process of how individuals learn to label both their own and others' feelings and actions as 'angry' over the lifespan, is an important issue.

4.2 THE SOCIALISATION AND REGULATION OF EMOTION

The process of socialisation of emotions involves learning and becoming familiar with "how and when to express emotions that are, or are not experienced, how to regulate emotions in ways that are age and socially appropriate, and how to understand such affect management in others" (Strayer, 1986, p. 43). Early parent-child interactions provide occasions for affect expression regulation both in terms of those emotions that are most reciprocated (positive versus negative emotions) and how they are expressed (facial communication versus load, verbal communication, yelling screaming et cetera). Children's adaptation to the social environment also requires that they learn that certain situations provoke expectations about how people should feel and how to suppress or modify their expressions so that they are appropriate to both self and social interests (Strayer, 1986).

The effects of socialisation within the Western culture are apparent in children's behaviour; there are both individual, gender and age-related differences in children's responses to affect-laden stimuli (e.g., Buck, Baron, & Barrette, 1982; Strayer, 1986). Adult attributions to infant expression definitely are; girls are viewed being more frail, happier, and boys described as more aggressive and robust. As a consequence emotional expression can be seen to be shaped, for instance boys appear less spontaneously expressive and less adept at posing expressions than do girls who tend to be more expressive and discus their 'feelings' more frequently (Buck, et al., 1982). It is likely that the socialisation of emotional

responsiveness both permits and encourages females to acknowledge, particularly in verbal self-report, their feelings in response to others (Strayer, 1986).

The social value of certain expressions is well appreciated by most children; the incidence of social smiles increases dramatically from 2-1/2 to 4-1/2 years of age (Cheyne, 1976) and remain particularly prevalent for females of contemporary Western culture (Feldman, Jenkins & Popoola, 1979; Saarni, 1979; 1984). Thus it seems that children are being socialising to display 'positive' emotions and are given the message that the expression of so-called 'negative' emotions is not appropriate. The socialisation experiences of children influences their emotional responsiveness; Masters, Barden & Ford (1979) found that children's responses to affect-induction depended on their previous socialisation histories, whilst Zivin (1979) noted that emotion signals were linked to social status. These messages are particularly salient and long-lasting.

Thus if development is viewed from a social constructivist perspective, the process of how children and subsequently adults come to acquire and formulate emotional scripts, how emotions are represented and the actual display of emotions when angry is important. Whilst development of affect occurs throughout the lifespan, perhaps the most significant time, in terms of the sheer quantity to learn and ramifications for social survival, is during infancy/childhood.

4.3 INFANCY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTIONS

EMOTION EXPRESSION AND AFFECTIVE INTERACTION IN INFANCY

A proliferation of research into the emotional experience of infants has occurred (e.g., Field & Fogel, 1982; Izard, 1982; Lewis & Michalson, 1983). Infants provide an optimum resource for targeting the development of the early social emotional experience in terms of any possible universal and/or biological determinants of emotional expression. However, overall it appears that generally evidence is equivocal, at best, regarding the specificity of distinct emotional states in infants or adults.

It does appear that even very young infants experience different affectual states; for instance, anecdotal evidence well documents parental attitudes regarding the existence of different types of crying. Scientific studies too, uphold the notion that infantile vocal expressions are related to different emotional states (Scherer, 1982). Varying intensities of infant crying seems to convey different messages of hunger, pain or anger (Wolff, 1969), or of pleasure and distress (Sternberg & Campos, 1990).

Current theoretical views of emotions generally acknowledge that, to some extent, the existence of early emotions serves some functional or adaptive purpose. That is it gives a sign to a caregiver as to the infant's state. However, which emotions are inborn or universal remains fiercely disputed; Izard suggests 10, Plutchick 8. The 'basic' emotions which are thought to be apparent during the first year of life include joy, sadness, fear, anger, disgust, interest (or anticipation) and surprise (Lewis & Michalson, 1983). The attribution of such emotions to offspring is common (Sternberg & Campos, 1990). Anger is frequently perceived by mothers; 84% of mothers saw anger in the infants expressions, compared to sadness by 34%, fear 58%, surprise 74%, joy 95% and interest by 99%. Such agreement may be highly reflective of either specific cultural attribution's, or, biological universals in expressive behaviour.

Caregiver-child interactions are vitally important for understanding how early emotional expressions and responsiveness develops, as both caregiver and child repeatedly exchange emotional signals and regulate social exchange. Both the caregiver's response to the infant, and the use of a positive and varied expressive repertoire, is important in that they are thought to lead to the development of animated responsiveness and emotional coping capacities in children. Though there is little conclusive evidence that infants can discriminate facial expressions meaningfully before 6 months of age (Caron, Caron & Myers, 1982 cited in Strayer, 1986). Infants also appear sensitive to the emotional state of their mothers. Infants faced with mothers who stimulate dysphoric affect change their expressions from positive interactive ones to negative expressions and refrain from looking directly at their mother (Clyman, Emde, Kempe & Harmon, 1986). Infants as young as three months who have mothers that report frequently feeling angry, appear to display high levels of anger themselves (Clyman, et al., 1986). Thus to some extent infants appear to be able to regulate their own emotions and emotional displays to significant others (Strayer, 1986).

The process through which early emotional expression becomes linked to social communication has been the subject of much recent work. Infant expressive behaviours are responsive to environmental contingencies, may benefit from practice, and be modifiable through reinforcement and extinction procedures (Campos, Barrett, Lamb, Goldsmith & Stenberg, 1983). The role that caregivers, especially primary caregivers (most frequently mothers), play in the socialisation of emotions has been examined through reciprocal affective interactions (Maletesta & Haviland, 1986; Maletesta, 1985) and social referencing (e.g., Klinnert, Campos, Sorce, Emde, Svejda, 1983).

Reciprocal affective interactions research indicates that the emotion expression patterns in the first eight months of life change in ways that appear to be based on observational learning and reinforcement contingencies present in dyads interactions of parent and child (Maletesta & Haviland, 1986; Malatesta, 1985). Furthermore, Malatesta contends that

increases in infant expressivity and positive emotion displays occur when mothers show higher rates of reciprocal facial responses contingent on infant displays, and when they modelled these positive affects to infants. Although it is widely acknowledged that parent affect displays will subsequently influence infant affect, the issue of bidirectionality needs to be addressed; for instance, infants persistently displaying anger may provoke the disinhibition of anger responses in mothers (Malestesta, 1985) suggesting that a negative-reciprocal effects cycle may be at work.

In social referencing, the infant behaves in a purposeful manner: she/he searches for information from a significant other person in order to clarify the emotional meaning of an ambiguous situation (Klinnert et al., 1983). Infants as young as eight and a half months use social referencing to guide their behaviours (Strayer, 1986). For instance, Clyman et al., (1986) report that infants of this age were more likely to approach toys and resume interrupted activities, following another person's happy vocalisation, whereas they were unlikely to, following an angry vocalisation. Social referencing therefore provides a means whereby infants can differentiate between ambiguous stimuli and events. As such social referencing can aid the organisation and formulation of affect and cognitions. (Note though that social referencing occurs at all ages, we are constantly looking to other people, to get a "feel of the situation".)

It has been hypothesised that infants learn to recognise emotions through a series of successive steps. It is foolish to assume that what a child understands as anger is the same as an adult's understanding of anger. What a preschooler may mean by the word 'anger' is systematically different from an adult's understanding (Bullock, Russell & Russell, 1986). These researchers theorise that a child's conception of emotion develops over four levels;

Level 1: infants develop the ability to perceive gestures, change in tone, voice posture, though not necessarily to discriminate meaning (0-10 months),

Level 2: the infant finds meaning in facial expressions; mainly in terms of pleasure or displeasure. Understanding helps to facilitate social interactions

and guide the infants own responses (e.g., social referencing [Klinnert, et al., 1983]),

Level 3: children begin to expand the meanings they make of other gestures and expressions by making distinctions based on the situations within which the emotional display of others occur. These distinctions are based on words as well as the behaviour of others,

Level 4: children begin to construct emotional scripts. Through associating multiple elements together, the child begins to combine elements in temporal and causal sequences, thereby forming a generalised script. Labels for 'emotions' are supplied by the culture, stimulating the child to differentiate amongst events previously treated similarly.

4.4 CHILDHOOD AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANGER

EMOTION EXPRESSION AND AFFECTIVE INTERACTION IN CHILDHOOD

As a child matures their involvement in angry episodes changes; older children are more likely to become involved in angry interchanges (Cummings, Zahn-Waxler, & Radke-Yarrow, 1984; Cummings, 1987), are less likely to overtly display angry feelings (Cummings, 1987; Goodenough & Tyler, 1959), and spend longer times "being" angry (Goodenough & Tyler, 1959). Further, due to a child's increased cognitive abilities and capacity to distinguish the 'shades-of-grey' within an argument, children are more able to pick-up subtle injustices and minor hurts which younger children may not notice nor give meaning to (e.g., teasing). Finally, as children age they are better able to recognise the multiplicity of emotions, that two or more emotions may occur simultaneously or mixed, for example sadness and anger (Donaldson & Westerman, 1986; Harris, 1985; Harter & Buddin, 1987), and that emotions, such as anger, are elicited by an increasing number of situations (Piaget, 1981).

Anger in a child is more reactive than provocative (as a response to another's hostility, or stemming from the child's feelings of frustration) (Rosenberg, 1985). Younger children (5-7 years old) do not differentiate between intentionality and accidents; the older a child becomes the more likely he or she will be angered by perceived, intentional, provocative actions. The situations which potentially provoke anger are well recognised from an early age (Cummings et al., 1984). Children also most frequently identify the home as the environment within which anger is most likely to occur. Cummings and Cummings (1988) found that children were most likely to report that they were angered by their 'siblings' or by family 'fights and arguments', and perceived maternal anger as most commonly aggravated by 'Dad', though many are aware that the antecedents for the expression or experience of emotion are not necessarily the same for all people.

THE ABILITY TO LABEL EMOTIONS

> *"Children's acquisition of emotion labels seems particularly relevant for their identification of their own subjective experiences, as well as for their understanding of and empathy for other's emotions" (Staryer, 1986, p.49).*

From an early age, children have a highly evolved and complex understanding of the interpersonal nature of emotions. How children come to acquire the knowledge of the rules surrounding how emotions should be expressed has been well researched. From two years of age children start labelling emotions (Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow & King, 1979). Children as young as two are able to talk about affect states and frequently converse with their mothers about their feelings (Dunn, Bretherton & Munn, 1987). Concerning the process of how we acquire emotion words, it would appear that the major source of such concepts will be parental; for instance over 70% of parents use affect terms when reading to their under-fives, though whilst mothers use an equal number of affect terms with both their sons and daughters, fathers tend to use more affect words with their daughters than with their sons (Saarni, 1985). As children grow they become aware of emotional behaviour in others, they learn to modify their own feelings and behaviour to conform with the wishes of parents and the

broader social rules (Maletesta & Izard, 1984). Their ability to do so (that is to encode emotional messages) is positively correlated with their parents ability to encode emotion in others (Saarni, 1985).

As children age a shift from endogenous and physical elicitors (such as crying and verbal statements) to exogenous and psychosocial elicitors (e.g., the advent of the social smile) is linked to one of the most important points in an individual's life, that of language acquisition). The ability to acquire language, to 'think', and to discourse with others indicates both voluntary and social control over expressions.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE

The acquisition of language is a major developmental milestone. A child's development is frequently judged by their level of literacy, the extent of their vocabulary, and eloquence. Vocabulary is the vital element in which children are socialised. Children are taught how an emotion is to be experienced and how they are to be semiotically indicated to the self and others (Geertz, 1959).

The acquisition of language is far more than merely learning to read; children at a pre-reading level are very aware of meanings and symbols of the visual, if not the written, word. Imagine a mother's surprise, and horror, when her 18 month old child "read's" a 'Cocacola' sign! Similar symbols permeate our children's lives (Macdonald's, petrol stations, fast-food outlets, department stores etc.). The major medium in which children learn these symbols is through visual means, that is, most frequently, the television. Where is the television? Who mediates what will, or will not be watched? Thus whilst the social or cultural setting of the child may have an enormous influence on a child's development, the parent and the wider family environment or whanau, is the major determinant of which the messages and symbols from the cultural setting the child will receive, the meaning he/she will attach to them and their subsequent influence on how the child views his/her self, their family and the social

environment. As parents then we act as filters for our children, determining not just what they see, but how it is seen.

For children then, the acquisition of language; that is the ability to understand meaningful discourse, represents the crucial fundamental factor in terms of social constructivism. Once a child can understand what is being said, and what it means conceptually, they begin to understand society and their position within it. Through these heavily value-laden judgements about themselves, parents, and various groups within society, children build-up a view of the world, scripts of how people should behave generally, and a working knowledge of how emotional scripts in particular are applied.

One major means of this learning is in the observation and imitation of emotional expression. We have already seen that infants as soon as they are able, start to imitate and 'try-out' emotional expressions on those around them (think for instance, of the importance placed on a 'first smile'). Whilst many people have a problem with social constructivism, in that it takes away most, if not all, of the individuals ability to be a thinking unit, instead leaving the individual at the mercy of his/her environment, it is anecdotally much easier to see how children's emotional expression is shaped by the environment; for instance, we teach our children what to cry about, reinforcing tears resulting from a stubbed toe, but not from the disappointment of a television programme being turned off. Thus when different parents responded to tears in slightly different ways, children learn what to expect and what is expected of them. As such, so called, individual differences are formed; what an individual hears depends very much on how it is said and the person who is listening (Laiken & Schneider, 1980). Regardless of the reasons for a parent's response to a child's actions, the child is learning through both overt and non-verbal rejection or acceptance by others, just which emotional expressions are considered appropriate for which particular situations.

How do children learn to behave, think and feel, when confronted with anger in others, experience their own 'angry' feelings? The expressions which are used to describe emotions

also point to the type of behaviour that will follow. Through language we get a feel for the likely behavioural consequences. The expression, or intensity of the expression, may be a clear indication of the behaviour that will follow. Thus to 'get angry' does not describe a state of mind, rather an incipient act, giving vital clues as to the expected behavioural response of both ourselves and others. Each situation is subject to a disciplined form of expression which reflects social and cultural boundaries of expression and control, and allows the child to "try out", reformulate and rework their emotional scripts. This process of continual refinement is probably lifelong, though in terms of quantity and necessity, the childhood years are undeniably the most crucial to lifetime functioning.

KNOWLEDGE OF DISPLAY RULES

The rules which govern emotional expression are known as display rules. Saarni (1979) suggests that children acquire a set of affective display rules or guidelines based on the interpersonal consequences that they experience for their emotional displays, and as such, demonstrate a working knowledge of which factors may produce certain affective states (Barden, Zelko, Duncan & Masters, 1980; Carlson, Fellman & Masters, 1983). Any variation in affective display is posited to occur as a function of the expectancies regarding what is socially appropriate in a particular situation. Saarni argues that the family environment is significant for the socialisation of emotions, as it is mainly within this context that children learn expectancies concerning how others will react to their expressive behaviour. For example, parents appear to respond more verbally to the expression of anger than to other emotions (Fuchs & Thelen, 1988).

Differences in maternal and paternal attitudes about their children's emotional behaviour and the perceived emotional climate of the home are related to the children's expectancies for their own and other's emotional experiences (Saarni, 1985). Children learn what it is acceptable to display and under which conditions; that specifc emotions are responded to differently.

Children's affective responding in interpersonal relationships and the way they manage emotions becomes sustained and generalised through their acquisition of the rules surrounding emotional expression. Social rules, which define the appropriate context for emotional displays, regulate both intentional and involuntary emotional expressions. Display rules involve cognitive processing, and reflect the individual's experiences, and life-long learning about the self and social constructs (Strayer, 1986). The symbolic function of non-verbal behaviour is evident in facial expressions and gestures, which are organised during conversation to support the verbal flow (Ekman, Sorenson, & Friesen, 1969).

From childhood, children learn to use emotion not merely to reflect their inner states, but also to influence others, if for instance young children believe they are being observed they will intensify their cries when hurt (Saarni, 1985). As children acquire, and refine, their information about affective experiences, they learn to construct accounts of how others might respond to their overt displays. Thus, the communicative impact of emotions comes under further regulation due to demands for social appropriateness and "face-saving" displays. This leads to the voluntary dissociation of emotional experience from its expression, or, on occasion, to feeling emotions because one "ought" in a situation.

During childhood years, a child's knowledge of how display rules may be applied to different situations increases in line with age maturation. Several researchers have documented that a child's awareness and knowledge of display rules of emotions are related to their age (eg. Weiner & Handel, 1985; Fuchs & Thelen, 1988), these studies consistently found that older children were more likely to report that they made attempts at various times, and in various situations, to suppress the expression of a felt emotion than did younger children. An earlier study be Saarni (1979) also notes that with increasing age children learn that the expression of negative emotions would be met with less positive reactions, and, because of this expectation as children age they regulate and suppress their negative affective expression more. Fuchs & Thelen's (1988) finding that the expression of emotions is

generally less tolerated as children age and that older children are less likely to express their negative emotions than younger children further supports this. Finally, the explanations that children generate, concerning why emotional behaviour should be managed, increase in complexity. This may reflect an increase in their knowledge of cultural, as well as individual or family expectancies, concerning emotion display (Saarni, 1979).

Reichenbach & Masters (1983) suggest that negative emotions may be more influenced by socialisation experience than other positive emotions. Anger and sadness appear to be the emotions most influenced by socialisation. This is supported by the work of Harris (1985) who documents older children's ability to mask and apparently alter their emotional expression by redirecting their angry thoughts. Even very young children are aware that they have control of their emotional expressions, and that by controlling the outward expression of their emotions, that they can protect themselves. 6- to 10- year old children dissimulate emotions in order to avoid trouble and preserve self-esteem (Saarni, 1979). Thus older children are more aware of the social rules which govern, and mediate, emotional expression than are younger children (Fuchs & Thelen, 1988). In general older children report that they are less likely to report their emotional state than are younger children.

It is also likely that the gender of the child is a relevant variable; socialisation practices pertaining to emotional behaviour are different for boys than for girls, thereby impacting on a child's expectancies and anticipated emotional expression. Mothers and fathers may differ in their responses to the emotional expressive behaviour of their children. Not only may the consequences for the expressive behaviour differ between mothers and fathers but children may observe differences between their parents in their own expressive behaviour. For instance the expression of anger by fathers may be more frequent than the expression of sadness, whilst, the reverse may be true for mothers. As a consequence male children appear to be especially cautious with regard to expressing their emotions (especially negative emotions), and unless they expect a very positive outcome they are unlikely to express their

emotions (Fuchs & Thelen, 1988). Males are also slower (in terms of age) in the acquisition of affective display rules for anger (Fuchs & Thelen, 1988).

Females are more likely to express sadness than boys and conversely are less likely than boys to express anger and perceive a probable greater negative response to the expression of anger than any other emotion. This may be indicative of a socialisation effect, whereby sadness is encouraged in females and discouraged in males, whilst anger is encouraged in male children and discouraged in female children. One example supporting this is the finding that preschoolers already associate 'positive' emotions with females and negative emotions (i.e., anger) with males (Birnbaum, Nosanchuk & Croll, 1980).

These studies support the notion that age and gender both regulate the individual's expectancy, and likelihood of emotional expression. Display rules are more clearly developed in older children, and the expected outcome of a response is carefully considered before any feelings are expressed. Display rules are based on the direct expression of the child but may also be vicariously observed through the outcome of others emotional behaviour.

WITNESSING ANGER IN THE HOME

All children are exposed to anger (of varying levels) in a home environment. There is also a smaller but significantly large number of children from discordant families for whom an angry atmosphere, anger interchanges and aggressive actions (either implied or expressed) are an everyday part of life.

Whilst the notion that the presence of anger in the home is related to the development of psychological problems gains support from studies which illustrate that children whose families experience marital discord, divorce, abuse and coercive family patterns are likely to develop psychological problems (Hetherington,1984; Porter & O'Leary, 1980; Schneider-Rosen & Cicchetti, 1984), these research methodologies have tended to focus on the direct interaction of the child in an angry situation, rather than investigating the residual or indirect

effects of continually witnessing anger in significant others over a long time. For, even though a child is not directly involved in anger does not mean that the child's functioning will not be effected (e.g., Bandura, 1977).

It is apparent that especially within a family environment, children are frequently placed in the role of by-stander, or witness, of another's anger. Consequently, the child will be placed in a position where they have to 'live with' family, or parental anger. Children's responses to anger in others does not have to be obvious, emotional behaviour and feelings do not necessarily correspond to a situation, for instance a child may feel anger but display neutral affect (Cummings, 1987). How a child responds to adult anger in adults is related to the mode of expression, and the age and gender of the child.

MODE OF ANGER EXPRESSION

Research suggests that the physical expression of anger is the most distressing type of anger to children (Jaffe, Wolfe, Wilson & Zak, 1986) and the literature suggests that parents especially, should ensure that when they are angry, they do not become physically aggressive (Egeland, Jacobvitz & Sroufe, 1988).

However, it would seem, that whilst physical expression of anger is too common in many family homes, there are many families who rarely, or never, experience physical aggression when angry.

The direct expression of anger may be beneficial in determining a healthy and functional outcome for a family. Therapist Nyman (1972) notes from his experience of working with families involved in conflict it is in those "situations where secrets play a central role, where parents hide disagreements from their children . . . [the]. . . recognition that people can fight in the open seems to reduce the overall tensions and encourage a healthier sense of family" (p12). Thus, many families appear to encourage the display of anger, as it is assumed to

facilitate resolution, whereas non-verbal displays may be considered less amenable to the constructive "working through" of angry feelings.

AGE

At younger ages there is less differentiation, therefore less detection of, disparity among nonverbal emotion channels (Strayer, 1986). As we age our ability to decode emotions in others becomes better and more sophisticated, though we tend to be more sensitive to facial expression than by voice or body cues (which are less likely to be controlled) (Cummings et al., 1984). Whilst witnessing anger in adults is distressing to all children (who perceive anger negatively) (Cummings, Ballard & El-Sheikh, 1991), older children generate more specific solutions to adult anger and are more likely to become involved themselves in the dispute than are younger children (Cummings et al., 1991). Earlier work suggests this effect is observable from a very early age; that whilst children aged 2-3 may not be as likely to become involved 4-5 years olds are frequently likely to respond with distress and offer protection or comfort for their mother's anger (Cummings Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1981; 1984).

The coping strategies adopted by children for coping with displayed anger become more sophisticated as they age. Children utilise strategies such as social sharing, social responsibility and positive emotions to escape from situations which provoke anger (Cummings, et al., 1987). However these more sophisticated strategies need to be offset against a child's increased sensitivity to, and involvement in, the conflicts of others. Whilst preschoolers (4-5 year olds) take on more personal responsibility in an angry incident than do toddlers (they are more likely to comfort and protect their mothers during and after angry incidents), primary school aged children (6-7 year olds) are more likely to directly intervene and comfort those involved in family conflicts (especially parental conflict) (Cummings, et al., 1991). However preschoolers were more likely to display distress in response to anger in others than were toddlers who tended to utilise coping strategies characterised by ignoring, affectless displays, failure to acknowledge the conflict. Thus as children age their involvement in family conflicts increases, as a function of this so too (apparently) would their

vulnerability to be emotionally hurt. Further support for this comes from Dunn & Munn (1985) who suggest that higher rates of emotionally negative responding in children who have witnessed another's anger, indicates that children are more affected by background anger, than are their younger counterparts. Relative emotional and cognitive immaturity may be influencing the toddlers ability to process anger, thereby counting for their increased alienation or withdrawal from the event.

GENDER

That boys are more likely to report a contagion of angry feelings when witnessing anger in others, typically responding to adult anger with anger and aggression, whereas girls tend to report that they feel distress, anxious and in turn inhibit their own behaviour when witnessing anger in adults, has been demonstrated many times (e.g., Block, Block & Gjerde, 1986; Cummings et al., 1991; Cummings, Iannotti and Zahn-Waxler, 1985; Feshbach, 1986). Further girls are more likely to attempt to find solutions to adults' conflicts, and are typically more predisposed to display greater involvement as bystanders in the conflict (Cummings, et al., 1989). This finding has also been observed in family settings (Vuchinich, Emery & Cassidy, 1988). Daughters are more likely than sons to intervene in disputes at the dining table (Vuchinich et al., 1988) likewise girls respond less frequently with aggressive emotions than boys to videotaped segments of adults interacting angrily (Cummings, et al., 1984). They were also more likely to suggest their intervention as a third party and proposed more competent solutions for the conflicts.

The question regarding sex-differences is far from resolved. One explanation for the apparent gender-differences is that males have an increased vulnerability to physical and psychosocial stresses than females (Cummings et al., 1991). Boys display more aggressive responses and are more likely than girls to exhibit severe and prolonged behavioural disturbances (Robins & Rutter, 1990; see also Hetherington, 1984; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). This may be due to males modelling their father's uncontrollable behaviour, or their becoming

disturbed when they are unable to control external events, and/or the inconsistent discipline which they are more likely to receive than girls (Kurdeck, 1994).

TYPE A BEHAVIOUR IN CHILDREN

The tendency to respond in a certain way when angry is the phenomenon identified as an *emotional trait*, and has been linked to early childhood development (Malatesta & Wilson, 1988). Some children may be characterised as having a stable trait, or general propensity toward anger. Anger is an identifying feature of what is known as Type A behaviour; characterised by "extremes of aggressiveness, easily aroused hostility, a sense of time urgency, competitive striving for achievement, and hurried voice stylistics" (Rosenman, 1978, p. 404).

Children as well as adults have been found to display the stable psychological, physiological and behavioural characteristics associated with Type A behaviour (Matthews & Angulo, 1980; Visintainer & Matthews, 1987; Bergman & Magnusson, 1986; Weidener, McLellarn, Sexton, Istvan & Connor, 1986), though the overwhelming majority of research investigating Type A behaviour has focused solely on the occurrence of Type A behaviour in adults, and it is only recently that researchers have started to question the developmental issues involved in Type A behaviour.

Parental child-rearing practices may be contributing to the development of Type A behaviours in children (Visintainer & Matthews, 1987), for instance sons of parents who have set high goals for their children, and, of fathers who perceive that these goals are not being met show a tendency to develop Type A characteristics (Kliewer & Weidner, 1987). Likewise those children identified as having a Type A behaviour pattern, tended to have parents who make comments which encourage their children to continually strive and achieve (Matthews & Woodall, 1988; Matthews, 1977), consequently the child itself places a high emphasis on personal achievement and continually increases their demands for self-competence (McCranie & Lewis, 1987).

4.5 ADOLESCENTS AND ANGER

Researchers have tended to focus on the negative aspects of anger in adolescents; for instance the role of family conflict and anger in the development of adolescent psychopathology. The literature is very sparse with regard to any investigation into the constructive aspects of anger for adolescents. Generally, researchers have investigated the 'problem behaviours' in adolescents, and whilst a few have come to appreciate that the *problem* behaviour per se, is often not the crux issue needing to be addressed, but that the communication patterns which characterise the parent-adolescent dyad exchanges may be eliciting and maintaining unwanted conflict and anger. Thus the focus is still on the negative aspects of anger, viewing it as a potentially destructive element if evident within families, rather than as a constructive tool allowing for both familial and personal development.

However, for adolescents, learning that anger just doesn't disappear or can be successfully denied, and therefore needs to be addressed, is a major developmental task. Anger can be a frightening emotion for adolescents (Laiken & Schneider, 1980). The ramifications of not controlling anger can be very damaging; emotional hurt or physical harm can result, especially when anger is often not coped with well. Significant elders (models or mentors) may also display a general apprehension of anger or an inability to control anger contributing to the formation of patterns that adolescents refine and carry with them into adult life, and thus, intimate relationships. Learning appropriate ways of anger expression and resolution may be very challenging for young people.

Over adolescence individuals become aware of not only the internal feelings of anger, but they also gain a growing awareness of the effects anger has on others; for example adolescents are given the message that anger "doesn't look good" (Laiken & Schneider, 1980, p.11). Many basic, and necessary social skills involve learning how to handle what we label as angry feelings. The importance of these feelings, the way they are dealt with, and how we

learn to accept them, is a function of, and in part-determined by, our age as well as our social constraints. Thus the social rules which exist regarding social behaviour are likely to reflect these differences in expectations; for instance, making different allowances for the expression of anger, and the intensity of anger, dependent on an individual's age.

Whereas as children tend to recognise emotions such as anger by its common behavioural characteristics (e.g., yelling, screaming, foot stomping), the multiplicity of anger and a growing awareness of its heterogenous nature as one matures leads to a growing awareness that other equally important behavioural responses can indicate feelings of anger (sadness, tiredness, depression, betrayal, and/or confusion), or that we can disguise the anger experience (Laiken & Schneider, 1980).

Developmental changes in social-cognitive abilities and capacities (Seleman, 1980) are likely to influence an adolescent's knowledge of display rules and sensitivity to displayed anger in others. Age-related changes in how adolescents respond to anger in family members are also evident (Cummings et al., 1991). Due to cognitive advances, for instance the development of formal operational thinking means adolescents are better able to construct hypothetical solutions to conflicts (Piaget, 1972), may mean that adolescents are better able to intervene, and cope, in angry social contexts than younger children (e.g., Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989).

Adolescent identity development has been positively correlated with the frequency of expression of disagreement with parents within families when the disagreement did not pose a threat to the family (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985; Hauser, 1984). Adolescents who come from families where there are less family disagreements are more likely to be stable individuals, with a firm sense of self and direction for the future. The nature of the affective discussions between adolescent-parent dyads is positively correlated with the adolescents adjustment and the behaviour of mothers is most likely to be related to overall adolescent adjustment (Tesser & Forehand, 1991). It may be that because of her frequent day-to-day contact with the child

the maternal anger may produce adjustment problems. Other research supports the importance of maternal reactions to the adolescent in determining how teenagers view the experience of family anger. Adolescents reported a growing frequency of family conflict when they encountered negative interactions with their mothers but not when they reported negative interactions with their fathers (Creasey & Jarvis, 1989).

Adolescents who report positive social support from their parents are likely to perceive high levels of family cohesion, family expressiveness and low levels of family anger; in addition adolescents who experience satisfaction with the relationship with their parents report low levels of family conflict. These adolescents who perceive negative interactions with both their mothers and fathers, tend to see their families as generally unexpressive and lacking in cohesion (Creasey & Jarvis, 1989).

However the expression of anger in teenage homes is not considered by all to be of a negative nature. A study utilising interview techniques of 'reasonably healthy' adolescents about their family life, revealed that all subjects reported anger occurred frequently both within their selves in a family situation, and, in their families (Berger, 1978). The mode of anger expression for these young people for both their families and themselves, was most commonly reported to be through words and attitudes, and rarely through physically aggressive means for either parent (as a form of punishment) or by the adolescent. These adolescents reported that their families usually directly addressed family anger, "got-it-out", and quickly forgot the episode; anger was not viewed by any of the subjects as a prevailing characteristic of the family home.

Cognitive changes influence an adolescent's ability to control or express angry feelings in a successful manner. Piagetian theory regarding formal-operational thinking suggests that adolescents start to learn that shades of grey and complexity of meanings occur; it also allows individuals to be more abstract within their thinking. Thus cognitive maturity allows

adolescents to recognise that there is a multiplicity of realities and that people feel and react differently.

Adolescence is the time during which the crucial influence for development and growth shifts from the family and towards peers and schools. Whilst general attitudes towards family, schooling and the self may have formed by this time, during adolescence young people learn to formulate satisfying interpersonal relationships, not necessarily just with family members. Most schools ignore their role in the affective development of adolescents and children, instead focusing their attention on cognitive development and acquisition of knowledge. Even though it is through direct experience and watching the relationships of their teachers and peers children/adolescents learn about the role of emotions in relationships.

THE EFFECTS OF DISPLAYED ANGER ON ADOLESCENTS

The effects of displayed anger in children has already been investigated. Subsequent research by the same researchers suggests that the effects of expressed anger on adolescents is significantly different from the effects on children, and that the mode, or how, anger is expressed to adolescents changes (Cummings, et al., 1991).

Cummings et al.,(1991) found that the responses of three groups of older children/adolescents (9- to 11- years, 13- to 15- years and 17- to 19- years) to adult anger alters according to age. Nearly all adolescents, regardless of age, are able to identify an angry person, regardless of the mode of anger expression. Adolescents far more frequently report that they respond negatively to anger displays. Young women, or adolescent females, report significantly more personal anger in response to viewing anger in others, than do young men, or adolescent boys. It was postulated by the researchers that it may reflect a greater sense of violation of social rules and expectancies in these situations. They also suggest that girls may tend to take more responsibility for the social behaviour of others, especially their feelings of discord thereby creating more anger and frustration in the witnessed deviations

from social norms. Overall it indicates that the anger of others is viewed as a negative event and reacted to as a stressor throughout adolescence.

Before this thesis develops any further a word of caution is needed: most of these studies of emotional responses when angry, the effects of viewing anger in others, the perceived consequences of expressing emotions et cetera, relate to research which has been conducted using strangers, generally involving two adults interacting in supposed negative manner; the generalisability of these findings to a familiar, or family situation, is at best highly speculative. A child, or adolescent's, response to parental anger is highly likely to be influenced by the history and type of relationship between the child/adolescent and his/her mother/father, as well as within the family as a whole. It might, for example, be expected that fights between parents would elicit stronger responses than fights between strangers (Giacoletti, 1990 in Cummings et al., 1991).

Anger with parents, siblings or as a whole family is a natural part of family life. We consider it natural to love our family members but tend to hide from the acknowledgment that we may frequently (and often times quite justifiably) become angry at those we love. The exposure to a single outburst of family anger is unlikely to create any long-lasting difficulties for a child (or it's parents). It is likely that anger within the family is both a necessary, and critical, part of our development, including the development of coping skills, communication skills, problem-solving, and learning to accept various viewpoints.

However society has given the clear message that excesses or extremities of emotions, such as anger, are extremely dangerous; anger is perceived as threatening to what we know, and accept, as right. Within a family the expression of anger can be perceived as highly threatening, or toxic. We are taught that families are there to nurture and support, that "you can chose your friends but not your family", reinforcing the feeling of permanency, and dependency, within the structure of the family; that they will always be there to protect and help. The expression of anger, either during acute instances where a flare up could result in

people saying things they do not mean, or, chronic displays of anger over long periods of time, can be perceived as a direct threat to family stability, hence threatening our own sense of self, and security. Thus how an individual puts into practice the display rules, socially acquired personal beliefs, and familial behavioural patterns when angry determines by-and-large the experience of a family when angry during any one particular angry episode.

5.

ANGER AND FAMILIES

5.1 WHAT ARE FAMILIES?

Families are closely knit units, bound by genetic and biological links, as well as by strong and intense emotional bonds. A family acts and responds, not necessarily independently, but rather, as a result of past experiences, and through an acknowledgment of expectations that certain patterns of behaviour will recur. Further, if the social constructivist approach to emotions is upheld, then the way the family experiences (and re-experiences) an anger episode can leave vital clues as to how the individual will respond to anger.

Families are by nature dynamic and develop continually over time (e.g., additions to the family, sometimes losses, relocation, new 'phases' of life et cetera all influence the familial experience). One major part of family development is the process of gathering memories . . . the shared sense of history family members share with one another. The process through which memories are experienced, shared and remembered has been open to much theoretical debate. The theory of social constructivism can be applied well to families, as children do much of their learning in the familial environment. For instance, Harre (1986, 1989) discusses *complementation* whereby families reconstruct their memories through an interactive and discursive process involving all the family members. It is through our memories, and social representations of people, events and emotions that we make judgements as to how we expect others to behave, or how we formulate decisions about our own behaviour. Thus the familial experience is one which involves all the family members, is dynamic, and powered by the patterns of discourse within the family.

Families, whilst having a number of similar characteristics, do not necessarily appear to function in the same way across all families. Further, family and individual functioning when angry, does not occur within a vacuum Each angry episode is not independent of all other episodes of family anger. The family environment in which anger is expressed is as important, if not more so, than the specific identities of the individuals in conflict. Family anger episodes will thus be effected by both past familial experiences of anger, as well as being influenced by the expectation of the outcome.

A family's collective understanding of anger is as important, if not more so, than the specific identities of the individuals in conflict. It is foreseeable that the same mode of anger expression will be interpreted differently in different families. Subsequently the outcome of such an anger episode in each of these families would be conceivably quite different. Social constructivism is a means through which we can apply certain rules for behaviour to a wide range of possible family variants in emotional responding when angry. A family can exert a powerful (sometimes more powerful) influence than society at large on an individual's functioning. Thus the same processes which determine how anger may be expressed, talked about, viewed within a cultural setting are likely to be evident within the family.

THE FAMILY AND ANGER

Whilst we tend to think of anger as a negative emotion, one which if expressed may be perceived as threatening to the family and have the potential to destroy relationships; anger is a relatively common experience for most families, indeed, for many families the 'normal healthy' expression, and resolution of anger involves all family members yelling and screaming at each other until they're blue-in-the-face. There are many marriages based on this 'passionate' interchange of ideas, "the bond between lovers is an odd and magic thing, and if persistent anger is a sign of dissolution for some, it is the sign of its strength for others" (Tavris, 1982, p.220). Thus, normal family living will generate anger, the intensity and volume of which it is highly unlikely will be matched in any other form of social situation within which

we find ourselves. Averill (1982) points out that the very nature of living with people makes us more likely to experience anger in a family situation because;

(i) the close contact provides an increased opportunity for anger,

(ii) that those 'irritating things' that people do tend to be cumulative and distressing,

(iii) we are more strongly motivated to change our loved ones' habits, and anger is a means through which we may do this, and,

(iv) we tend to feel more confident and secure in expressing anger to our family (the response at least, whether positive or negative, is largely predictable).

There was a large amount of research concentrating on family interaction in the late 1960s; the last decade has seen a noticeable reduction in the quantity of research within this field. Further, little research investigates 'normal' emotional expression within the home. Most concentrates on aspects of dysfunction. Whilst dysfunction is evident in a number of homes, and the home is the most common place for screaming arguments and violence (Vichinich, 1987), it is not necessarily characteristic of all homes. This is not to say that anger in the home is not potentially damaging; anger can contribute to numerous social problems, including physical and verbal aggression, child abuse, physical and property damage, and health problems, such as coronary heart disease and hypertension (Deffenbacher et al., 1986). Rather, it is to demonstrate that little is known about anger's psychological origins (Mizes et al., 1990) or how anger manifests itself in psychologically "healthy" families. Both family (e.g., Strauss, 1979) and developmental (e.g., Erikson, 1968) theorists have argued that anger and conflict within families may have positive consequences, for instance allowing for ventilation of feelings, expression of emotions and the modelling of open communication.

However, the expression of anger within the family is often viewed negatively and deemed inappropriate. The language, or verbal expressions, we utilise to describe anger in others is often highly judgemental and degrading. By embarrassing, or attempting to make a family member feel ashamed, such comments as "Oh grow up!", "Be reasonable!", and/or "Can't you take a joke?" are unconsciously reinforcing the message that anger is bad, should not be

expressed (Laiken & Schneider, 1980). Thus the displays of anger by family members is often considered immature, illogical and can increase feelings of insecurity both within the family and the individual. But, just because a family may see anger as unreasonable it does not prevent family members from feeling anger. We frequently stay "cool" and deny feelings of anger, or alternatively express it in acceptable ways; for example, we tend to comfort family members who are crying or appear emotionally hurt.

NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION OF EMOTION

Another way families attempt to 'deal' with anger is through indirect non-verbal means. A lack of direct communication when angry allows for invalidation, and if necessary a denial of the emotive state. Nonverbal emotional displays are particularly important in understanding how families communicate their emotions; as early as 1962, researchers were demonstrating that non-verbal communication is particularly sensitive and illustrative of how a family is getting along (Bateson, 1962). Non-verbal communication within a family can serve a powerful function; what is being said, and agreed within a family situation may differ significantly in meaning from the non-verbal interchanges within the came context. This is demonstrative of the multiplicity of functions that emotions serve, and the complex nature of emotion in families; by stating one thing and indirectly implying another through non-verbal, yet in easily recognised patterns, for each family member; the family as a collective whole, either unwittingly, or consciously, removes itself from the threat of openly acknowledging angry feelings. As such when we come to interpret the behaviour of a loved one we do so in an active manner, viewing it through the perceptual biases and filters that have been established throughout a family's common history (Guthrie and Noller, 1988). Both history and satisfaction with the family will be directive in determining what an individual's biases and filters will be.

5.2 AN EXPLANATION OF HOW FAMILIES CONSTRUCT EMOTIONAL SCRIPTS

Due in part to the relative paucity of research into the field of emotions in marital and family functioning by psychological researchers (Guthrie & Noller, 1988) (for instance most research is concerned with how the expression of emotions differs between distressed and non-distressed marital dyads), rather than highlighting the functional role of emotions in a familial setting, the discussion which follows, of how emotions manifest themselves in the family home is in parts somewhat rudimentary and based upon supposition.

The study of emotion within a family relationship is best undertaken when 3 main assumptions are accepted (this is a modified version of Guthrie & Noller's 4 assumptions for emotion research in marital relationships); (1) that emotion within a family is best studied in a relational context as part of an ongoing communication process, (2) that within each family unit it is up to the family members themselves to decide which behaviours/communications (verbal or otherwise) are classifiable as emotional, and (3) that how individual family members perceive and interpret behaviour of others is as, if not more important than the actual behaviour itself. These assumptions give credence to the view that families reconstruct their own reality, the perception of the consequences of a behaviour on a family are more salient in terms of family functioning than the actual act. This is an acknowledgment that families act, or react, based on their perceptions, not necessarily due to the intention of the actor, as well as acknowledging the existence of general emotional scripts which dictate how a family views specific behaviours, thereby allowing for a type of 'family subjectivity'.

Our emotional behaviour is guided by social rules (Averill, 1980; Harre & Secord, 1972); the beliefs that we have regarding the expression of emotions in various situations. Such rules are socially derived and operate as "internalised expectancies" (Guthrie & Noller, 1988). Whilst this research indicates that social rules are heavily influenced by situation, and gender

and guide our interpretations of events (Averill, 1980), how social rules and emotional scripts become embedded in family functioning has not been addressed.

Within a family, and indeed any context, events occur which can be reconstructed in a number of ways, all of which may, or may not, be a true reflection of the individual's experience of the situation; commonly things "very often aren't what they seem to be" (Nyman, 1972, p.11). Nyman supports his view that illusions and self-perceptions are a common occurrence within the family by reference to the Descartial view that the essence of the self is observed in thinking. Thus the belief we hold that we can behave and think neutrally within a situation, is an illusion. This illusion can not be more aptly demonstrated than within a family environment in the midst of a angry interchange.

Angry family interactions are heavily emotionally-laden; the processing, recollection and reconstruction of these events occurs through an emotionally-charged cognitive pathway, where the actual occurrences, and meanings placed on the motivations of the actions by other family members, are open to misinterpretation. Each family member interprets the behaviours of other family members when angry, as a function of the their own experiences within the family, including the common modes of thinking and behaviour on which the family rely. It may be that when we become angry within our family we are at our most stressful and therefore are most likely to fall back on old patterns of fighting and become less able to see our own role in the interactions (Lerner, 1985).

Thus, it is likely that the reconstructing and initial interpretation of conflictual events is highly dependent on the view the individual has of him/herself in relation to other family members. In addition, when a family disagreement occurs family members tend to 'take sides' (as such, neutrality seems utterly alien to a family anger episode). Those families experiencing anger frequently label other family members as either "good guys" or "bad guys" (Nyman, 1972). Taking sides in families tends to occur due to either a sense that one 'side' is right and/or we feel threatened by dissonance. Anecdotally, it is common to hear one spouse

blaming the other for a misunderstanding, for something not going to plan, et cetera. We seldom tend to take responsibility for our own provocative, or foolish actions. Nyman explains this labelling process as one way in which we generate psychologically acceptable explanations for our actions in conflict situations. That is, so as to reduce any perceived threat to our selves we tend to perceive other family members as the "bad guy"; though this seems especially characteristic of parents rather than children who are more candid and open, than their parents were, about their failures and responsibility in family conflicts (Wallerstein, 1986). As we age we more frequently look to the role of others in conflict and see ourselves as to blame. Covell & Abramotivich (1987) found that whilst 5-6 year olds attributed maternal anger to themselves 7-15 year olds were more likely to cite both themselves and other family members as causes of maternal anger.

By assuming a person has control over his/her emotional attitudes (i.e., behavioural gestures) we then accept and use them as tokens of intention. Thus for all practical purposes the subjective feeling of an emotion is not relevant. What is most important is what the recipient takes to be the other's subjective feeling. It is this interpretation that elicits the responsive act that achieves both ontological and behavioural status.

Any one family is likely to have a mix of behavioural patterns and common values that are fundamentally constructed of two things; the social/cultural rules and the rules specific to the family. In a family the explanations we generate for the emotional behaviour of significant others are interdependent on family knowledge and information of past attribution's (Munton & Anataki, 1988). Thus the sequences and contingencies in behaviours are more important than the actual frequencies of the behaviours (Patterson, 1985, in Margolin, 1988).

As a family, then, we generate a set of rules, or values, through which we observe and regulate both our personal and familial behaviour. The value judgements we make of another's behaviour is part of a conceptual category, inherently connected to our social conscience, or identity (formulated through family functioning), through which we constantly

regulate our relationships (Katakis, 1988). By accepting common values as a family, it is assumed that the instances where anger and conflict may arise, are reduced. Subsequently, these commonly held values also provide some insulation from any external disruptions.

The system's view of the family is worth considering here as it posits that families, as a social unit, are strongly affected by individual members' characteristics (e.g., if someone was ill, or occupied a position of power) (Minuchin, Baker, Rosman, Liebman, Milman & Todd, 1975). Thus both familiar patterns of anger, and familiarity with a knowledge of appropriate roles for specific family positions, may be highly influential in determining both family and individual functioning.

Normative behavioural patterns of a family form the framework from which general rules regarding roles and emotional expression are formed. Children who witness anger within their homes tend to respond with distress whereas if they witness affectionate and positive emotional episodes in their families they tend to respond with like (Cummings, Zahn-Walker & Radke-Yarrow, 1981).

Whilst it is commonplace to talk of attributions as originating from within the individual it would appear equally plausible that there is a real social component which can be linked with attributions (eg. Antaki, 1988; Hewstone, Bond & Wan, 1983; Munton & Antaki, 1988). The information which is used to make an attribution is drawn from the social domain and the attributions which are formed are frequently formed within the presence of others. As the behaviour of someone is likely to affect and alter the environment within which they are moving so too are the attributions that others make about them likely to alter the dynamics of a situation. Thus in a group such as the family which has close ties and whose members are interdependent on one another such attributions are likely to be commonplace.

The important role of the home on the general development of a child has long been recognised (e.g., Fox et al. 1983); however attempts at understanding the interpersonal

atmosphere of families has by-and-large been anecdotal. A child's or adolescent's actual understanding of "how their family works", that is, their perceptions of their own family's environment have only been investigated sporadically. However an individual's perceptions of the intent of another family member's displayed behaviour is likely to greatly influence behaviour, both inside and outside their home (Fox, 1983).

The kinds of information that adults and children use to infer causes of emotional reactions appear similar (Strayer, 1986). Information about people is preferred over normative data which is preferred over situational information (Gnepp, Klayman & Trabasso, 1982). Even preschoolers recognise the salience of personal reactions when assessing emotional reactions, and situational cues seem particularly important when the person is unknown (Strayer, 1986).

VARIABLES INFLUENCING FAMILY FUNCTIONING AND THE EVOLUTION OF FAMILY SCRIPTS FOR ANGRY INTERCHANGES

Whilst the researcher has argued that family scripts and roles are, through definition, unique to each family, there are common variables between families which are influential in determining which sorts of emotional scripts individual family members, or the family as a whole will formulate; for instance parenting style, personality variables of individual family members, and an individual position within the family are important determinants of how they will interpret the emotional behaviour of others, and the explanations subsequently generated. In turn these variables may give us an insight into the functioning of dysfunctional families.

PARENTING STYLE

Social behaviour appears to be influenced by factors such as parenting behaviour, the sex of the child, and marital conflict in any type of family structure (Santrock, Warshak, Lindberg & Meadows, 1982). The parenting style displayed by a parent will be fundamentally based on these and will likewise play the major role in determining the emotional experience of the child. Affective quality and the nature of the parent-child relationship may influence the child's

experience of anger. Individual differences in responding to emotion in family members has been associated with child-rearing practices, particularly to the emphasis by parents that feelings are important (Zan-Waxler et al., 1979). Thus the use of consistent parenting practices is highly correlated with positive parenting, which is subsequently linked to confidence and feelings of competence (Tesser & Forehand, 1991).

The development of pro-social behaviours in children was associated with parents who extended their parental control over their children in a manner characterised by warmth, reasoning, and acceptance (known as authoritative parenting style), whereas parents who extended parental control in combination with rejection, hostility, and the use of physical punishment have been associated with children who displayed anger and aggression (authoritarian parenting style) (Baumrind, 1989). Likewise, Matthews & Woodall (1988) found that the more a parent was lacking in warmth, were unsupportive, uncohesive, and not open to emotional expression, nor actively involved within the family climate, the more chronically, openly angry and hostile the children of this parent. Further when parents consistently agree on issues their children have higher levels of psychological adjustment (though this was more so for boys than girls) (Block, Block, & Morrison, 1981).

PERSONALITY VARIABLES

Personality characteristics of the parents have been associated with overall family functioning when angry. Hypertensive fathers appear to have a significant influence on how the family as a whole functions when angry. Families with hypertensive fathers cope with family anger differently from normotensive families. Negative non verbal behaviour (reflecting hostility and interpersonal rejection) occurs significantly more frequently in families where the father suffers from hypertension (Baer, 1983). This influence of hypertensive fathers on behaviour extended to all family members, for instance wives of hypertensive men rely on non-verbal forms of communication and tend to shy away from addressing a provocative issue directly (Baer, 1983). Thus the family unit as a whole is involved when there is paternal hypertension. Thus hypertensive families are characterised by indirect coping methods and

an aversion to tackling the anger head on, the style used by this family to cope with anger is likely to be embedded in the family's 'normal' dynamics. There is support for the notion that families with a paternal hypertensive provide an environment for children which facilitates the learning of a conflict management style which could be directly related to the development of hypertension as adults.

The way a family functions has important consequences for the child's ability to adapt to situations and to control the expression of their feelings. Both ego-resiliency (an individual's flexibility to balance internal drives and external environmental constraints) and ego-control (level of control an individual has over the expression of their feelings) have been related to family functioning (Sroufe, 1991). Ego-resilient individuals (characterised by resourcefulness, an ability to maintain an integrated performance under stress, an ability to process two or more competing stimuli et cetera) tend to come from families with loving, patient parents who freely exchange their problems and feelings and have reduced arguments about child-rearing practices. Families which have a high-level of anger and conflict, have anxious or ambivalent parents are likely to be ego-resilient (inflexible, fixed pattern of adaptation) (Block, et al., 1987). Over-controlled adults have been found to come from families emphasising structure, order and conservative ideas, whereas under controlled adults came from families which experienced a high degree of conflict, disagreement about child-rearing practices and little emphasis on orderly teaching (Block, et al., 1987). Both over- and under- control are thought to be maladaptive and both are related to families where anger is not dealt with in either a constructive or consistent form. Over control is predicted to occur in families where emotional vulnerability is met with attack, from families were there is a high level of conflict, under control results from families where there are a variety of behavioural responses and little regard for behavioural constraint (Sroufe, 1991).

FAMILY POSITION

The position an individual occupies within the family will be indicative of the overall emotional experience of that individual; how he or she sees their own behaviour and the behaviour of others is determined by the role they fill within the family. For instance the emotional experience of a wife is influenced by the frequency of her husbands anger; in couples where the husband expresses anger more frequently than the wife, the wife will report high levels of satisfaction (Davidson, Balswick & Halvorsen, 1983), that is, where a woman fills a traditionally subordinate role and does not appear to function outside its dictates with regard to anger, she is significantly likely to report higher levels of marital satisfaction. Thus a wife's happiness in this instance was dictated by her husband's functioning. Women generally are more reciprocative of their husband's effect than husbands are of their wives' (Notarius & Johnson, 1982); wives reciprocate their husbands' positive and negative affect whilst husbands tend to follow their wives' positive affect with neutral affect and negative affect inconsistently. Thus dependent on position, and by implication gender, husbands and wives behave differently in emotional situations (Guthrie & Noller, 1988). By extension, it appears perfectly reasonable to generalise this overall finding to the family at large (that is, that the position of power within a family influences individual family member's functioning).

DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES

Whilst this thesis is concerned with everyday anger-related issues facing a 'normal' family (whatever that may be), it should be noted that there is an assumed relationship between the mechanisms involved in how dysfunctional families interact and those characteristic of 'normal' families interactions. It is assumed that everyday family conflicts may become embedded or enmeshed thereby leading to inappropriate and even dysfunctional family patterns. As such, the development of dysfunctional family patterns when angry is viewed as developing from potentially 'normal' family interactions.

That a small number of families may engage in angry displays in ways sometimes considered to be wholly inappropriate by society at large, is not to say that the processes by

which this family experiences anger have not developed in the same way as in non dysfunctional families. The product rather than the means has differed; the patterns of behaviour, processes through which they have been learnt and are reinforced deviate little from a healthy family to a dysfunctional one.

An example of this would be the many people who decry women who stay with abusive husbands. The recent case of Gay Oakes, a local Christchurch woman, found guilty of murdering her husband, created much discourse regarding her defence that she was suffering from battered woman syndrome. Many times the question "why didn't she just leave" or, "she didn't have to stay" were levelled at her, her family, and supporters (e.g., 20/20 documentary, October, 1994). (Note the types of words which suggest the ease, simplicity, and assumed complete free will.) Irrespective of the rights and wrongs within this case, it serves to demonstrate the ways in which a woman (or anyone) may experience their family's functioning as normal, believe it (at least to some degree) to be normal, as well as illustrating how other family members may also come to accept family functioning as normal (her children for instance testifies that they too had frequently been subjected to physical abuse and had come to expect this form of behaviour.

5.3 ANGER IN THE FAMILY

Familial anger is obviously a fundamentally interpersonal process, spanning across various ages, positions, family structures, as well as encompassing various types of personality and psychological variables. However, broadly speaking family anger can be broken into either marital anger (when one spouse is angered by the actions, attitudes of their spouse) or parent-child anger (when a child and parent experience conflict at the behaviour or attitudes of the other).

MARITAL ANGER

Lerner (1985) described anger within a relationship as a "circular dance", wherein the behaviour of each spouse/partner serves to maintain and provoke that of the other. For Lerner too, past experiences (both within and outside the relationship) may come to bear an influence on an immediate angry interchange; she notes that marriages frequently come up against unresolved issues from the past in the boundaries of the current relationship.

WHAT COUPLES FIGHT OVER

Rather than identifying the real issue, Lerner (1985) feels that couples frequently fight over pseudo issues (i.e., a false issue), or put their energy into trying to change their spouse. These types of anger interchanges often have negative consequences for both the intimate and family relationship (for instance when children become unnecessarily involved). She coins the term *deselfing* to describe when too much of one's thoughts, wants, beliefs, ambitions become negotiable under pressure within the relationship; deselfing is seen to be "at the heart of our most serious anger problems" (Lerner, 1985, p.40) and frequently is characteristic of female functioning within a relationship. Thus, for Lerner, anger within couples is most frequently due to the inability of either both, or one partner to express his/her anger and a tendency of couples to become polarised within their fighting (argue in repetitive, predictable patterns with increasing frequency).

Thus the experience of anger between spouses is likely to be provoked by a number of factors. The immediate provocation is likely to be coloured by the couples' history, individual personalities, and background differences. Tavris (1982) notes that "conflict, over serious differences and silly ones, is the nature of marriage" (p.231). Through her observations of couples experiencing and retelling anger instances, she found that many couples who had experienced anger frequently often had no apparent cause for the anger, that is, that the substance of what they were arguing about was in no way related to the precipitating event and that there often seemed to be no cause for the argument.

Whilst happy secure couples view the feeling and expression of anger as a natural product of living together, that is, they view each other as basically nice people who can occasionally feel anger, dysfunctional couples are likely to label anger as a core problem in their relationship and think of each other as a predominantly 'angry person' who is occasionally nice (Tavris, 1982). Thus marital satisfaction is a major factor in determining how couples view anger; in those families where spouses have low marital satisfaction anger can be destructive nearly all the time.

CROSS-GENERATIONAL ANGER

The role of anger in adolescent-parent conflict has been largely ignored, despite the predominant and pervasive stereotypes embedded within our culture with regard to parent-teenager relationships (Foster, 1987). Adolescence is viewed as a time dogged with conflict and anger outbursts between parents and their offspring and siblings. This relationship is characterised by a screaming, yelling teenager (who places the blame for world peace at his/her parent's door because they were not allowed to 'go out' on Saturday night) and by a harried, battle-weary couple (who turn to the bottle and each other in an effort to find out "where we went wrong"). There is, however, little empirical support for the view that adolescence has to be such a time. Indeed, unless parent-child relationships have been characterised by this form of exchange in the past they are unlikely to become so just because the child has reached a certain age. Whilst figures suggest that 15-20% of all teenagers suffer serious incidences of parent-teen conflict at one stage (Montemayor, 1983) there is little empirical support for this view of a haranguing, screaming, rebellious and irrational teenager constantly battling with a confused, weary parent, it is likely that parents and adolescents will encounter anger in some form or another over the teen years. It may be that the multiple changes (biological, cognitive and social) which occur during the adolescent years may contribute to adolescence as being a time characterised by general stress (e.g., Bandura, 1977).

Whilst the family home may be viewed as being a place of rest, a haven, a unit which can provide support and comfort. Montemayor (1983) notes that the frequency of family anger may hinder any buffering aspect of the family. Research has concentrated largely on aspects of description; for instance, what do adolescents and their parents become angry over?, what happens to parent-adolescent dyads when they experience anger? A number of studies have shown a negative relationship between adolescent adjustment and parental anger/emotionality (for example, Montemayor, 1983). Those families who report frequent, intense and unresolved family anger episodes are more likely to report a failure to use good communication and problem-solving skills, cognitive distortions and irrational beliefs, problem structural configurations (eg. parents who fail to work as a team, or relationships where one parent continually acts as a buffer or mediator), and interlocking reinforcement contingencies which support negative exchanges (Foster,1987). Likewise, parents and adolescents who come from 'distressed' families (ie. families where there is a high level of parent-adolescent conflict) report greater anger when discussing family issues than do non-distressed counterparts (Prinz et al., 1979).

However not all research indicates this negative correlation between family anger and adolescent/parental functioning. The effects of displayed anger may not always be detrimental. The expression of anger in combination with an expression of calm interests, could, in fact prove a positive experience for the adolescent (e.g., Tesser & Forehand, 1989). Nonemotional, clear communication between parents and adolescents has been viewed as an important function to prevent or mediate parental-adolescent problems (Robins & Rutter, 1990). Thus parental anger may be productive with regard to adolescent adjustment.

Further Tesser & Forehand (1991) found that the number of issues discussed angrily with mothers and fathers showed only a minimal correlation with adolescents' adjustment variables. Rather they found that the agreement or disagreement between parents was most closely related to an adolescent's assessment of an angry interchange. For boys, parental anger appeared to be buffered by the extent to which the two parents agreed about the angry

issue. When angry agreement between the parents was associated with a less positive adjustment outcome, was detrimental and associated with negative outcomes for the male adolescent, whilst, disagreement was correlated with a more positive adjustment outcome for adolescent males. However, this buffering effect did not exist for girls, who regardless of the level of agreement between parents generally had a negative response to parental anger. A number of independent studies provide explainations for this;

1. Girls are more vulnerable to stresses than are boys, and are more peer orientated (Simmons, Burgeson, Carlton-Ford & Blyth, 1987),

2. Girls are more vulnerable to parental anger due to a weaker emotional bond between daughter and father than between son and father (Thompson, Lamb & Estes, 1983), and,

3. The perceived lack of control over parental anger is more distressing to girls than to boys (Gunnar-von Gnechten, 1978).

5.4 ANGER AND FAMILY STRUCTURE

The shape and size of the family has changed greatly over the last century, reflecting changes in cultural thinking. By 1991 just under half of all New Zealand families were two-parent families (compared with two-thirds in 1971 (Department of Statistics, 1991). If the family is to be viewed as the place where most socialisation, and the formation of our understanding of emotions, occurs, then the changing face of the family may well be related to how we understand emotions.

ANGER AND DIVORCE

Anger may be the most realistic expectation outcome following divorce, especially for women" (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989, p.71).

In 1990 over 40% of present marriages in New Zealand ended in divorce (Department of Statistics, 1991). Once a couple becomes aware that they no longer wish to stay in an unsuccessful marriage, the break usually does not occur immediately. Thus, in families where parents divorce, it is likely there are a large number of children for whom an angry

atmosphere, anger interchanges and aggressive actions (either implied or expressed) are an everyday part of life. Children who witness the break-up of their parents' marriage face with a number of issues which threaten not only their family's identity, but possibly their self-identity as well. For instance, Weltner (1982) notes that enmeshment between mother-and-child may frequently occur and that the relationship is frequently maintained by suppressed anger, anger "too frightening to express" (p.4) as individuals may fear abandonment if anger is expressed turning instead to one another. Furthermore, events antecedent to the divorce, may influence emotional functioning, following the divorce. How the child responds has been positively correlated with the presence of anger in the family prior to the divorce (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989), and is a function of age. Research by Wallerstein (1983), Wallerstein & Blakeslee (1989) and Wallerstein and Kelly (1976) report that parental divorce and parental discord are very often especially difficult for the adolescent to handle.

Children from divorced families are more likely to display less competent behaviours, than are children from intact families (e.g., Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1978; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980), though these studies have not focused on longitudinal effects. Most notably, boys of divorced parents appear more aggressive than their counterparts from intact families (Santrock et al., 1982). It is possible that feelings of anger and frustration stemming from the divorce have not been dealt with by these boys, or that they come from a family where they may have witnessed a large amount of fighting and have yet to develop an appropriate model for anger expression and resolution.

Anger plays a pivotal role in not just children, but also parents following a divorce. Residual feelings of anger may linger long after a divorce. 60% of men and 54% of women remarked that they still had intense emotional feelings ten years following an amicable divorce (of which anger was most frequently cited) (Wallerstein, 1986). In this study, 40% of the women and 30% of the men still had high levels of angry feelings. Feelings of anger increased incremental with age for women. Older women (over 34 at the time of divorce) were more likely to remain angry after the divorce than those aged in their twenties or early

thirties. Anger for women was positively correlated to loneliness, the stress of being a single parent and continued anxiety about living alone, as well as being linked to economic issues. Further, independent of the formation of a new satisfying relationship 20% of families were still experiencing chronic levels of family anger in which the children were often involved or the focus of anger.

Whilst historically a divorced family has been seen as the antithesis of the 'safe and natural' nuclear family, this traditional view has been overstepped by recent research which demonstrates that families that have experienced a divorce are a potentially viable, growth-enhancing unit that may indeed be "preferable to a destructive conflict ridden nuclear family" (Hetherington et al., 1982). Thus through the re-establishment of other relationships and a high level of social support it appears that children of divorce can experience a long term positive outcome (Zastowny & Lewis, 1989). Following a divorce, the organisation of the family, and familial relationships, as well as individual psychological aspects, are dramatically changed (Bohanann, 1970). As such, divorce is an ongoing family process rather than an event which occurs solely at the individual level. The immediate consequence of divorce is to challenge individuals and the family to redefine itself.

ANGER AND STEP-FAMILIES

There are many adjustments that must be made following the reformulation of a family, or when a new adult enters a family in a position of power; in addition to those developmental tasks faced by their peers, children of remarried parents face tasks specifically related to the remarriage, which may well be characterised by anger; including learning to disengage themselves from anger between their natural parents and the resolution of feelings of loss, blame and anger towards both natural and step-parents, not to mention attempting to integrate with new step-parents and step-siblings.

The parent-child relationship inherently involves many displays of anger, and provocative actions which generate anger. The family's patterns of anger expression and resolution

develop over time. However, whilst the processes by which each family has operated and relied on may have 'worked' in the past in as much as all players within the family knew and fulfilled their parts, the formulation of a step-family means that members from one family can not benefit from the knowledge of the expected patterns of behaviour as held by members from the other family. Thus the expectation that a step family will develop structurally and psychologically into "just another intact nuclear family" is not accurate (Rosenberg & Hajal, 1985). There are many problems which are not being adequately addressed for step-families, of which resolution of conflict is but one variable. There are two important factors which need to be considered when investigating anger in step-families.

1. It is likely that because members of a step-family do not have the same sense of a shared history that they will not be familiar with their new family member's expected roles and regulations governing the feeling and displays of anger.
2. Because of this lack of shared history and due to stresses often evident when two families combine, for instance, anxiety about conflicts which could prove threatening to the new family (Rosenberg & Hajal, 1985), an environment is created which is ripe for feelings and displays of anger. It is possible that anger may be both expressed frequently and often dealt with in a way foreign to, or outside of the normal rules of regulating angry feelings, for one or some of the family members.

It may be that the presence of a step-parent is positive. Whilst little research has looked at the issue of a step-father's effects on girls' psychological development, other research suggests that the entrance of a step-father into a previously father-absent home has positive effects on a boy's cognitive and personality development (Santrock, 1972; Oshman & Manosevitz, 1976). It may be that due to newly formed power relationships that children may be more fearful of expressing anger towards a step parent (especially a step-father) a person from whom they are psychologically distant, than they are towards their biological parent. In stepfather families, step-fathers were more physically intimidating than biological mothers towards their step-children and less tolerant of disruptive behaviour.

The relationship between step-child and step-parent may be influenced by gender. It appears that daughters may be especially fearful of acting out feelings of anger towards their step-father (who they see as being in competition with them for their mother's attention), and that consequently their feelings of anger and resentment may be turned towards their mother, highlighting their relationship through coercive interactions. Conversely, boys from stepfather families showed more warmth, higher self-esteem, less anxiety and less anger than boys in intact families (Santrock et al. 1982).

ANGER AND SOLO PARENTS

Pressures placed on single parents may mean that they are more susceptible to frequent feelings of anger (there is a lack of a partner to buffer or mediate in angry scenes, increased pressures). Over half of all New Zealand children are being raised by a single-parent (Department of Statistics, 1991). Of these families, mothers tend to be, by far, the parent responsible for the upbringing and care of the child/ren. The consequences of parenting alone (economically, politically, socially, emotionally, personally) may by in large be thought of as being detrimental to the parent; in the United States single mothers represent one of the major consumer groups of mental health services (McLanahan, Wedemeyer & Adelberg, 1981).

The pressures placed on single parents may play a role in the parent's tendency to exhibit, or become, angry. For instance the lack of another parent who may buffer or share familial pressures means that the single parent has no one to share these mundane everyday irritations with, thereby increasing both qualitatively and quantitatively the everyday pressures of parenting. Further, the social support networks of single mothers differ from married mothers, in size, function and composition (Zastowny & Lewis, 1989); all in the negative.

Thus it is a feasible argument that anger may be displayed more frequently, be of a higher intensity and may even be expressed in different modes in single parent households as in two-parent households. Divorced mothers rearing their children on their own are less

controlling and more permissive of their children than are mothers from two-parent families (Santrock et al., 1982). Conversely, it is highly possible that if such hypotheses were supported that the children of single parents who are developing, or maturing, in an environment were anger is expressed differently (either quantitatively or qualitatively) that they may have significant differences in their experiences and modes of expression of anger for instance, research suggests that there are differences in the frequency of reporting unresolved family conflict between both the children and parents in intact families (report unresolved conflict less often) and single parent families (report unresolved conflict more frequently) (Zastowny & Lewis, 1989).

5.5 RATIONALE: REASONS FOR UNDERTAKING CURRENT RESEARCH

If the assertion that emotions are largely shaped by our family is to be supported, it remains for an investigation into the microprocesses within a family to be completed. Further there is a need to study anger and angry responses of individuals from community-based samples (most of the work that has been conducted has been carried out on university students). Thus the sample population needs to be broadly widened in terns of age, gender, profession, and educational background et cetera so as to allow for a more eclectic study of how anger actually manifests itself within families.

Previous research has focused almost solely on the provocateurs or the victims of anger. Whilst these are all important psychological aspects, the situational components also need to be considered. Recent research suggests that contextual cues may be as important in understanding interpersonal anger as the psychological factors. The family has not been studied as a specific environment within which anger is likely to occur. This project sets out to investigate not just how anger is expressed in a familial situation assuming that a contextual approach may be of advantage in the research field.

6.

HYPOTHESES

This thesis started with a statement that two of the important issues regarding an understanding of emotions was the need to investigate and provide explanations for; (1) the experiential nature of emotions and (2) their function. As has become evident from a reading of the literature, an attempt to describe these two aspects of emotions with regard to a specific emotion, or emotional syndrome, will give us a better understanding of emotional processes in general whilst also enlightening our understanding of how families function. By taking a social constructivist approach, familial emotional processes can be understood from both a personal level as well within the broader social environmental context. The questionnaire (see Appendix I) is the product of the researcher having generated a number of hypotheses believed to provide some preliminary information as to how families function when angry. It was hoped that rather than being a purely exploratory, or descriptive, thesis some primary indications as to how emotions influence a family's functioning when angry could also be investigated. Thus the results section is a combination of descriptions of data and of an investigation into statistically significant trends within the data. The descriptive data provides a picture of how emotions within the family are experienced whilst the chi-squared analyses provides evidence as to the highly interpersonal nature of emotions, such that, these may be potentially explainable by social constructivism.

Whilst the possible areas that could be examinable under this broad aim is very large the researcher generated 11 areas of possible research. These were quite vague initially, dealing with aspects of anger which were expected to influence the subject's experience of anger within the family. They subsequently became more detailed in order to investigate specific relationships within each variable. The hypotheses were developed after a consideration of

what sort of questions and answers would be of 'value' in researching the issue of the nature and function of anger in families. The following is a detailed list of the specific hypotheses.

Both personal and familial variables were hypothesised to influence the experience and expression of anger within the home.

6.1 INDIVIDUAL VARIABLES

AGE

From the reading and the basic theoretical perspective it is contended that subject age may well be influential in the experience of anger within the family. The researcher maintains that social constructivism can be taken as a theory of development, and therefore, that younger family members may not be as aware as older family members of family rules regarding the expression and display of appropriate levels of anger expression. The researcher generated a number of hypotheses around the broad belief that younger subjects will differ significantly in the frequency and quality of their experiences of anger and in their recollection of anger experiences from their older family counterparts.

Specifically the researcher had hypothesised significant relationships between subject age and a number of factors; that is, that,

1. the reported frequency of angry feelings in a family situation would be influenced by age,
2. the reported frequency of family anger episodes would be influenced by age,
3. the degree of control over overt expressions would be effected by age,
4. the degree of control over cognitions, and mental images would be influenced by age,
5. attitudes towards informing family members when they had caused feelings of anger would differ depending on age,
6. the level of physical aggression displayed when angry would differ significantly, dependent on age, and,

7. that the perception of the frequency of family anger would not be dependent on subject age.

GENDER

The researcher was interested in the relationship between subject gender and a number of factors related to the anger experience. That roles are dictated by social expectations is a major tenet of the thesis; as such, gender roles are an example of how social expectations and attitudes may be adopted by individuals. The researcher believes that there are socially formulated gender-dependent rules regarding anger expression and that these are generalisable to the family environment. That is, that there are roles within the family that individuals occupied on the basis of gender, and, that the individuals experience of anger would be dictated, in part, by these roles and expectations. Working hypotheses were generated around the basic belief that females and males would differ significantly in their experiences of family anger episodes and would differ in their recollections and explanations generated for family anger.

Specifically, the researcher hypothesised relationships between gender and a number of factors; that

1. gender would significantly influence individual's reported frequency of angry episodes,
2. gender would significantly influence individual's reported frequency of family anger episodes,
3. the reported control of overt expressions when angry would be dependent on gender,
4. the reported control over cognitions, mental images etc. when angry would be dependent on gender, and, that,
5. gender would be dependent on the reported frequency of physical aggression when angry.

ETHNICITY

Summary statistics in New Zealand indicate that the majority of crime is being carried out by Maori, (the Tanga te Whenua) even though there are proportionately fewer Maori than Pakeha in the population. This has lead to an increased media drive to highlight the possible biological and social reasons that may account for this so-called phenomena. Generally, the Maori are frequently held up as being a violent, or 'out-of-control' race. The researcher was interested in investigating whether data collected from homes of Maori in Christchurch would support, or fail to support, this widely publicised trend. The researcher generated 4 hypotheses to test the general belief that Maori families would display more anger and aggression in the home than Pakeha families and that the way the two cultures dealt with, and resolved anger would differ.

Specifically the researcher hypothesised a relationship between subject ethnicity and;

1. the frequency of angry feelings in a family situation,
2. the frequency of family anger episodes, and,
3. the frequency of physical aggression when angry.

FREQUENCY OF ANGRY FEELINGS

Much evidence suggests that anger depends in part on an innate trait, or propensity towards anger, for example, Speilberger et al., (1983) generated the State-trait Personality Inventory (STPI) in an attempt to find a scale which allowed for differences between transitory emotional responding (i.e.,., states) and individual differences to emotional responding (i.e., traits). While state anger is subjectively experienced as an emotive state which may very in intensity and fluctuate over time trait anger is defined by a relatively stable disposition, or tendency to perceive a wide range of stimuli as frustrating or annoying. Trait anger has been linked with a number of both psychological, physiological and health dysfunctions (e.g., Thomas, 1990), likewise parental patterns of anger display have been correlated with childhood patterns of anger and behaviour (Matthews & Woodall, 1988). It was hypothesised that an individual's general tendency to recall angry experiences would be dependent both on

inherent personality variables as well as strongly influential family variables (these were tested under Frequency of Family Anger Episodes).

The researcher hypothesised that subjects who experienced frequent instances of angry feelings in a family situation would differ significantly from counterparts who experienced less frequent instances of family anger in their reporting of anger experiences within the family. Specifically, the researcher hypothesised that;

1. the level of control one had over overt expression when angry would be dependent on the frequency of angry feelings,
2. the level of control one had over cognitions, etc. when angry would be dependent on the frequency of angry feelings, and, that,
3. the frequency of physical aggression accompanying anger in a family situation would be dependent on the reported frequency of angry feelings.

6.2 FAMILY VARIABLES

FAMILY STRUCTURE

It has been suggested that how a family defines itself within the community reflects the roles the family members occupy within the family (Zastowny & Lewis, 1990). In broad social terms one of the more common ways we define families is by their structure. Indeed, frequently the individual's family structure is held up as a reason, or even an excuse, for certain kinds of behaviour; anecdotal and historical examples, characterise single parents as having less direct control or parental influences and as having children that were more likely to 'run amok' than children from two-parent homes where fathers are viewed as stern authoritarian figures capable of 'disciplining' their children. However recent statistical information indicates that two-parent families are becoming less frequent and that the incidence of one parent families is increasing (Department of Statistics, 1991). Thus the effects of family structure and the presence, or absence, of parent or another adult on the familial and individual experience of anger were investigated by the researcher. Hypotheses

were generated around the general belief that an individual's experience of family anger would be a function of family structure.

Specifically, the researcher had hypothesised relationships between family structure and a number of factors; that

1. the frequency of personal angry feelings in a family situation would be dependent on family structure,
2. the frequency of family anger episodes would be dependent on family structure,
3. the reported duration and resolution patterns of a subject's family would be dependent on family structure, and, that,
4. the issues cited most likely to cause family anger would differ significantly from family-to-family based on the family's structure.

FREQUENCY OF FAMILY ANGER

Based on the belief that families are a closely knit unit where the behaviour and attitudes of one family member influences and effects (both temporarily and permanently) the behaviour, attitudes and emotions of another, it was assumed that the general frequency of family anger would be influenced by the widely held family beliefs that governed emotional expression.

Specifically, the researcher generated a number of hypotheses based around the broad hypothesis that the reported experience of family relations when angry would be influenced by certain patterns of family functioning whilst angry, that when angry;

1. the reported frequency of family anger episodes would be dependent on family age,
2. the frequency of personal angry feelings would be dependent on the reported frequency of family anger,
3. the frequency of an individual's control over behaviour expressions would be dependent on the frequency of family anger episodes,

4. the duration and resolution of family anger was related to the frequency of family anger episodes,

5. the perceived level of family anger would be dependent on the frequency of family anger episodes,

6. the issue most likely to cause family anger would be dependent on the frequency of family anger episodes, and that,

7. the perceived degree of control over cognitions, mental images and thoughts when angry would be related to the frequency of family anger episodes.

MODE OF EXPRESSION TO FAMILY MEMBERS

To further investigate this it was also hypothesised that the subject's own position of power would influence his, or, her, own responding to family members when angry. Thus the hypothesise was inverted to test whether a subject's report of their own responding to other family members would differ significantly in any way which was connected to their position within the family. Thus the researcher tested the hypothesis that;

1. a subject's responding to other family members when angry would differ dependent on the subject's position within the family.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE DISCLOSURE OF ANGRY FEELINGS TO FAMILY MEMBERS

The social constructivist theoretical viewpoint suggests that family experiences and personal experiences are intricately interwoven; that the family experience largely dictates the private. Thus it was hypothesised that a subject's reporting about family experiences or belief would be reflected almost identically in the individual's beliefs. The researcher therefore generated the hypothesis that a subject's beliefs regarding informing family members as to their feelings of anger would be dependent on the reported family belief.

Specifically, the researcher tested the hypothesis that,

1. personal attitudes towards disclosing feelings of anger when provoked would be dependent on familial attitudes.

FAMILY MEMBERS' RESPONSES WHEN ANGRY

It was hypothesised in light of much research which indicates that whilst there may be no apparent quantitative differences in the frequency of angry feelings, that due to positions of power, that the social representation of angry episodes may differ according to position. Some preliminary research supports the view that judgements we make about why someone is angry and whether we believe that they should be angry are likely to depend on the age, gender, marital status and political perspective of both the individual and the observer (Tavris, 1982) though there has been no systematical study to support this contention. Thus the hypothesis that a person's position of power may influence how they view the responses of family members when angry, has, to the researcher's best knowledge, never been specifically tested.

Specifically, the researcher tested the hypothesis that,

1. subjects would describe the behaviour of family members' dependent on a family member's position of power.

7.

METHOD

7.1 SUBJECTS

One hundred and two community-based subjects participated in this study, 45 males and 57 females. The mean age of the sample was 27.4 years (SD = 13.5). Of those subjects who were willing to divulge their ethnic background, 73 came from a European/Pakeha background and 18 subjects identified as coming from a Maori background. Most subjects (65%) came from families which were classified as two-parent intact. A quarter of the sample population lived with only one natural parent (12% lived with a single-parent, and 18% lived in a step-family). For statistical analysis those families which noted that their children were adopted (4%), or that the family regularly had foster children staying with them (1%) were incorporated into the two-parent intact category.

All subjects came from families where there were at least two generations of one family living at the same house. The subjects were recruited from the researchers wider group of friends, spouses, relations, acquaintances, or, through advertising in local papers.

7.2 PROCEDURE

The questionnaire was circulated by word-of-mouth, to friends, workmates, acquaintances, through advertising in local papers, and the like. As such a chain-letter style was adopted. Two hundred and twenty seven questionnaires in all were circulated (one hundred and two were returned completed).

Subjects were asked to fill in the questionnaire as best they could, drawing on their recent experiences of family anger. A covering page with basic instructions, rationale and general

information was also included. The researcher returned to the subjects homes to pick up the completed questionnaires, or they were returned by mail.

7.3 AIM OF STUDY

The aim of this study was to investigate how emotions may be socialised in families, specifically anger. A questionnaire was designed to enable such an investigation to occur in the least intrusive way possible. The questionnaire was designed primarily as a primary exploratory analysis tool to investigate the dynamics of family interactions when angry.

7.4 MEASURE (see Appendix I)

Family Anger Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed by the researcher following introductory reading within the area of family dynamics and anger research (e.g., Averill, 1982). The basic design has been adapted from the highly reputable studies by Averill (1982) into everyday anger experiences and aggression. The focus though, has been shifted towards the familial experiences of anger.

After initial formulation of the questionnaire it was tested three times; firstly, by showing it to two other post-graduate students within the University of Canterbury Psychology department, then by giving it to 6 members of the public, and finally, by the researcher's supervisor. Along each stage of primary testing 'subjects' gave feedback regarding understanding of questions, formatting and length etc.; alterations were discussed with them, and once they had been made the questionnaire was again presented to that group. The questionnaire did not move onto the next level of primary testing until all 'bogus subjects' expressed satisfaction with layout and ease of understanding questions. Subsequently, a

final 12 page questionnaire was constructed, of which 6 pages were relevant to the present study.

7.5 COLLECTION OF DATA

Subjects were asked to return the form (whether or not they had completed the questionnaire) either through the mail, directly to the researcher, or the researcher arranged to pick the questionnaires up directly.

The experimenter, once all questionnaires had been collected, coded each question. Data were analysed both as descriptive data and through the means of chi-square analyses.

SOME NOTES ON ANALYSIS

THE CHI-SQUARE

One major short-coming of the analysis of categorical data through the use of chi-squares is the accusation that directionality and magnitude are often overlooked. A chi-square is only a test of independence, and, as such, is only able to determine whether a two-tailed difference has occurred. That is, a chi-square can be used to determine whether a statistical significant difference exists between a Null Hypothesis and an alternative hypothesis, were;

H_o: There is no relationship between the two variables at a determined error level of $p<0.05$

H_1: There is a statistical relationship between the two variables that is likely in 95 out of 100 sample tests.

Thus the Chi-square (χ^2) distribution is used to analyse a nominal dependent variable (data which are mutually exclusive and have no logical order). By determining whether there is a statistically significant difference between observed frequencies and expected frequencies the researcher is able to conclude by comparing a test statistic to a predetermined critical

value, whether a statistically significant relationship between two variables exists and whether or not to reject the null hypothesis.

SMALL EXPECTED FREQUENCIES IN CONTINGENCY TABLES

Whilst it has been traditional to implement a Yates correction for continuity for 2x2 contingency tables where cells have fewer than 5 frequencies (Cochran, 1954), more recent studies, suggest that it is not necessary to implement the Yates' correction for continuity (Camilli & Hopkins, 1978) . Likewise the theorised loss of power that results from having cells with low frequencies is minimal and the Yates continuity correction not considered necessary (Hinkle, Wiersma & Jurs, 1994). This procedure has been adopted herein.

As mentioned above one major failing of the chi-square statistic is that taken on its own it is merely a test of homogeneity, as such it tells us nothing of the nature of the relationship between the two variables apart from their independence (or not). As a result the researcher has decided to include two other statistical calculations so as to give a better view of the degree and nature of any possible relationships. The standardised residual and a measure of association (phi ϕ , or Crammers phi ϕ_c) will be used.

STANDARDISED RESIDUALS

Even though standardised residuals are not commonly used it seemed appropriate to utilise them here, as it added further depth, and involved a better description of exactly which relationships were occurring. By looking at the standardised residuals (R) of the cells of the chi-square contingency tables it is possible to determine the magnitude and direction of the movement of the data, thereby allowing one to deduce the nature of the statistical significance.

The use of a standardised residual in analysis of a chi-square is similar to using standardised residuals in other statistical functions (for instance in regression). If we recall that when testing a null hypothesis we are testing the difference between a sample mean and a population mean. We know that;

$$x^2 = z^2 = \frac{(X-\mu)^2}{\sigma^2}$$

We also accept other facts about a binomial distribution (for instance that it is approximately normally distributed, that the mean of a sample (X) would be $=Np$ with a variance of $=Npq$). As such we derive the equation for a chi-square.

$$\chi^2 = z^2 = \frac{(X-Npq)^2}{Npq}$$

The more common derivation of this equation is to use O_i represent the observed frequencies and E_i represent the expected frequencies. Thus if we substitute X, Np and Nq as O and E we obtain the commonly recognised equation for a chi-square;

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Thus, if we accept this derivation we also accept that in a normal distribution a standardised score allows us to deduce how many standard deviations away the sample mean is from the population mean. In the chi-square a standardised residual (or the square root of the difference between the observed and expected values) will give us the equivalent value for the number of standard deviations away from the mean the cell value is.

Whilst many use the rule of thumb whereby if a standardised residual is greater than 2.00 (in absolute value) the researcher can conclude that that variable is a major contributor to the significant chi-square value (Hinkle, et al., 1994, Marascuilo & McSweeny, 1977) the figure of 2 is basically an arbitrarily chosen value (representing values which are above 2 standard deviations from the mean, or 64% of answers). The researcher will instead analysis and investigate the 'biggest movers' within each contingency table, that is, those variables which show the greatest movement to or from the expected value.

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

Two correlation coefficients have been utilised for analysing the data; phi (ϕ) and Cramer's phi (ϕ_c). Phi represents the correlation between two variables, each of which is a dichotomy (ie it takes on two distinct variables) (Hinkle, et al., 1994). Cramer's phi allows for the calculation of the correlation between two variables on a contingency table which are greater than 2x2. Phi has a range of -1.00 to +1.00 and Cramer's phi has a range of values of 0 to +1.00 as such any differences between the two variables are clearly reflected in the statistic. Due to the size of many of the contingency tables the calculation of Cramer's phi (ϕ_c) will be used as the preferred statistic.

The correlation coefficient is analogous to the r^2 calculation. A measure of association indicates the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that is accounted for by the levels of the independent variable. Thus a correlation coefficient of, say ϕ = .56 is equivalent to stating that 56% of the variation in the dependent variable can be associated with the variance in the independent variable (i.e., the statistic accounts for the degree to which variance in one variable may be determined by variance in another variable).

Thus the correlation coefficient tells us of the extent of the relationship between two variables as it provides us with a quantitative index of the relationship. Thus by computing the standardised residuals we are able to look at the direction and specific nature of the relationship. In terms of the present study it allows for conclusion based on the nature of how family variables influence individual variables within family angry episodes.

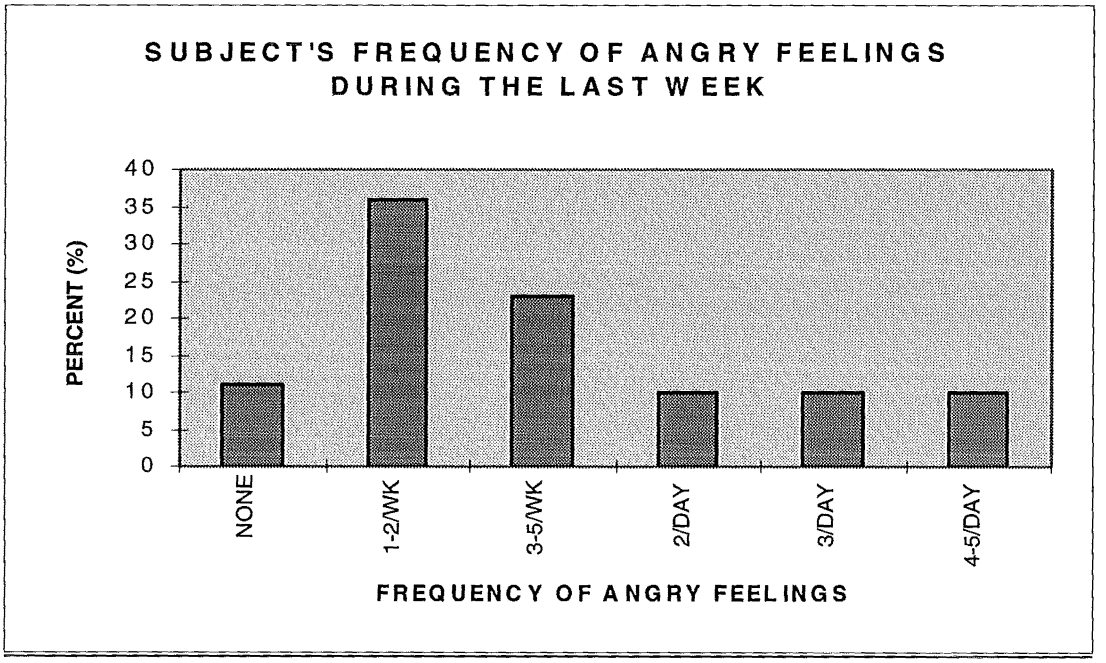
8.

RESULTS

8.1 THE EXPERIENCE OF ANGER IN THE HOME

FREQUENCY OF PERSONAL ANGRY FEELINGS DURING THE LAST WEEK

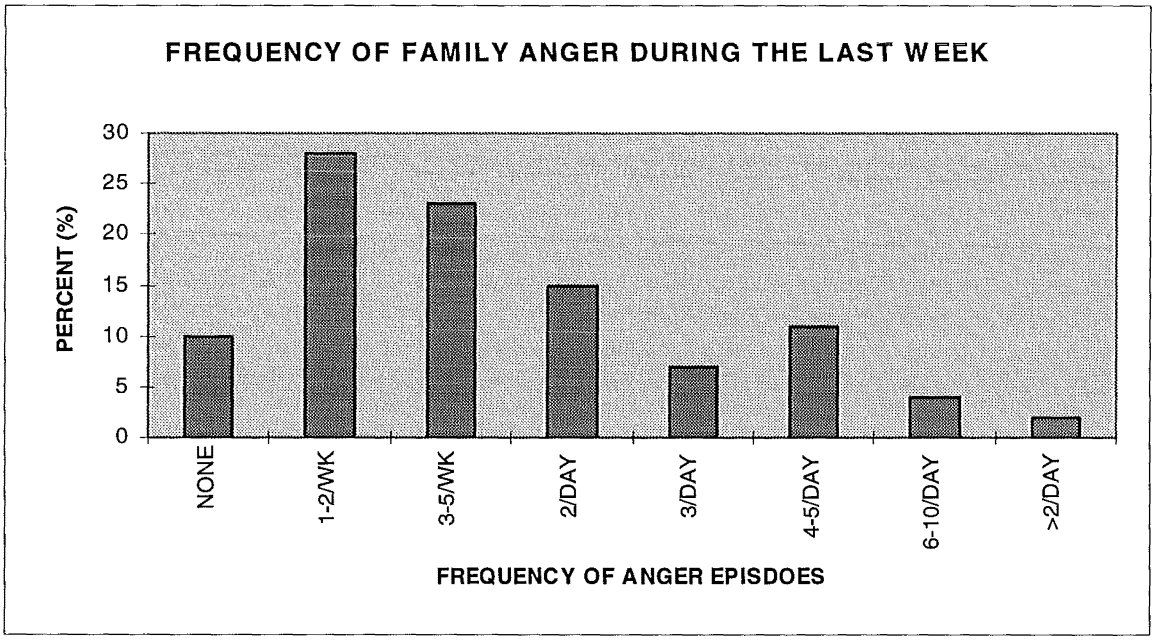
FIGURE 2



The majority of subjects reported that they became angry (that is either experienced angry feelings and/or expressed their anger) within a family situation during the last week. 72% of all subjects reported they experienced anger within a family situation less than once per day, whilst only 28% reported that they became angry within a family situation at least once per day.

FREQUENCY OF FAMILY ANGER EPISODES DURING THE LAST WEEK

FIGURE 3



Most subjects reported that their families experienced communal displays of anger during the last week (only 9% of the subjects reported that their family did not experience at least one display of anger). For the majority subjects family anger was experienced less than once per day; 51% reported that their family experienced a family anger episode between 1 and 5 times during the last week. 40% of subject's experienced anger at least twice a day. Of these subjects 43% had experienced anger more than 4 times per day in a family environment.

FREQUENCY OF FAMILY SOCIAL EVENTS

Overwhelmingly the majority of subjects said that their family did not in fact spend time together doing a social activity (e.g., including having a meal together) even once per day. Only one-fifth of subjects reported that their family had spent time taking part in a family activity at least once per day.

DEGREE OF CONTROL OVER BEHAVIOUR WHEN ANGRY

A 9 point Likhert scale was used to investigate subject's perceived level of control over expressions/behaviour when angry at family members (1=complete control of expressions when angry; 9=no control of expressions when angry). A range of 1 to 9 was found with a mean of 3.72 (SD = 2.03). On the whole subjects felt that they had a moderate level of control over their expressions when angry at family members.

DEGREE OF CONTROL OVER COGNITIVE IMAGES WHEN ANGRY

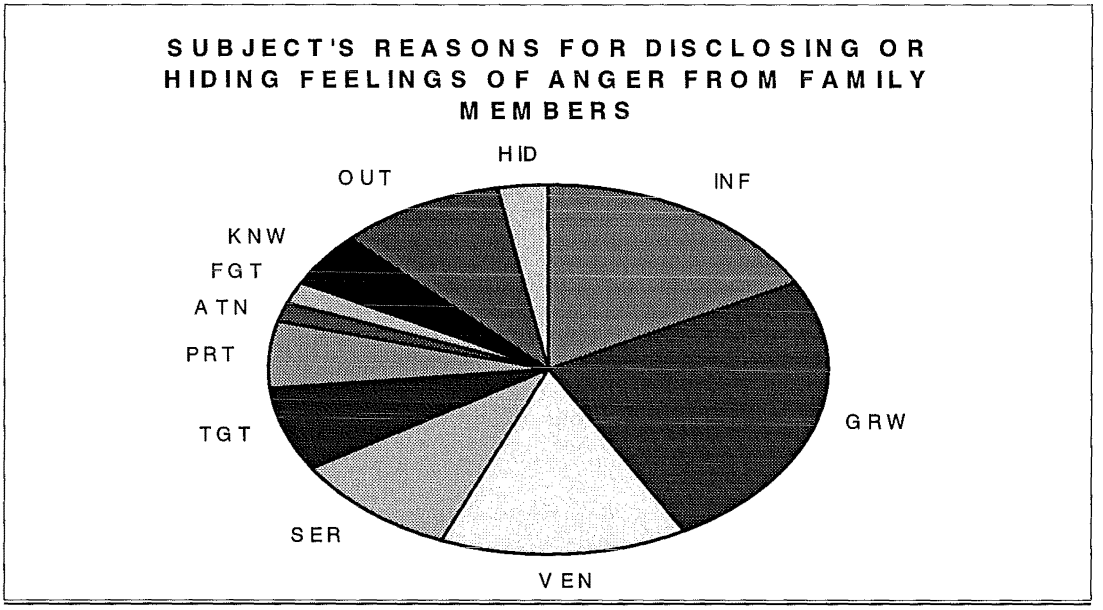
A 9 point Likhert scale was used to investigate a subject's level of control over cognitive images and thoughts when angered by family members (1=complete control over cognitions; 9=no control over cognitions). A range of 1 to 9 was found with a mean of 4.26 (SD = 2.1). Most subjects felt they had a moderate level of control over their cognitions when angry. There was an overall trend towards reporting a greater level of control over behavioural expressions of anger and away from reporting a higher level of control over cognitions when angry.

SUBJECTS BELIEFS ABOUT INFORMING FAMILY MEMBERS WHEN THEY HAVE CAUSED FEELINGS OF ANGER

The majority of subjects felt, if a family member had behaved in such away as to provoke anger, they should inform the provocateur of their feelings. 55% felt they would tell the family member responsible for their angry feelings. A subsequent 29% felt they would only disclose this information dependent on certain variables, (e.g., who the provoker was, the situation, the presence of other people, et cetera.). Few, 16%, reported they would not tell a family member if he, or she, had provoked anger.

REASONS FOR THE BELIEF THAT ANGRY FEELINGS SHOULD BE DISPLAYED OR HIDDEN:

FIGURE 4



Subjects had a number of reasons as to why anger should be hidden, expressed or displayed dependent on certain variables. The expression of anger was linked to three main variables; in order to inform family members (INF) as to the true nature of other family members feelings (17%), to promote discussion and resolution leading to family and personal growth (GRW-24%) or as a means of ventilating or "letting out" (VEN) angry feelings (14%). The immediate expression of anger was perceived by some (2%) to mean that the angry issues could be quickly put aside and forgotten (FGT) . The reasons given for hiding anger (HID) were connected to the general belief that anger should not be expressed to family members (3%), in order to protect the self (PRT-6%), to ensure that those that provoked anger weren't rewarded for their behaviour by being given attention (ATN-2%), or the belief that anger should not have to be stated explicitly . . . that family members should know the consequences of their actions on other family members (KNW-5%). Those subjects that felt that anger should be expressed dependent on certain contingencies were concerned with the response of the target, who may for instance be perceived as a reactive person (TGT-8%), they also cited the type of issue as being important, justifiable or serious issues (SER) should be addressed but not minor, inconsequential issues (15%). Another 6% were concerned

regarding the probable outcome of an episode (OUT) and were only likely to express their anger if the felt that there would be a successful resolution.

SUBJECT'S FAMILY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS DISCLOSURE WHEN ANGRY

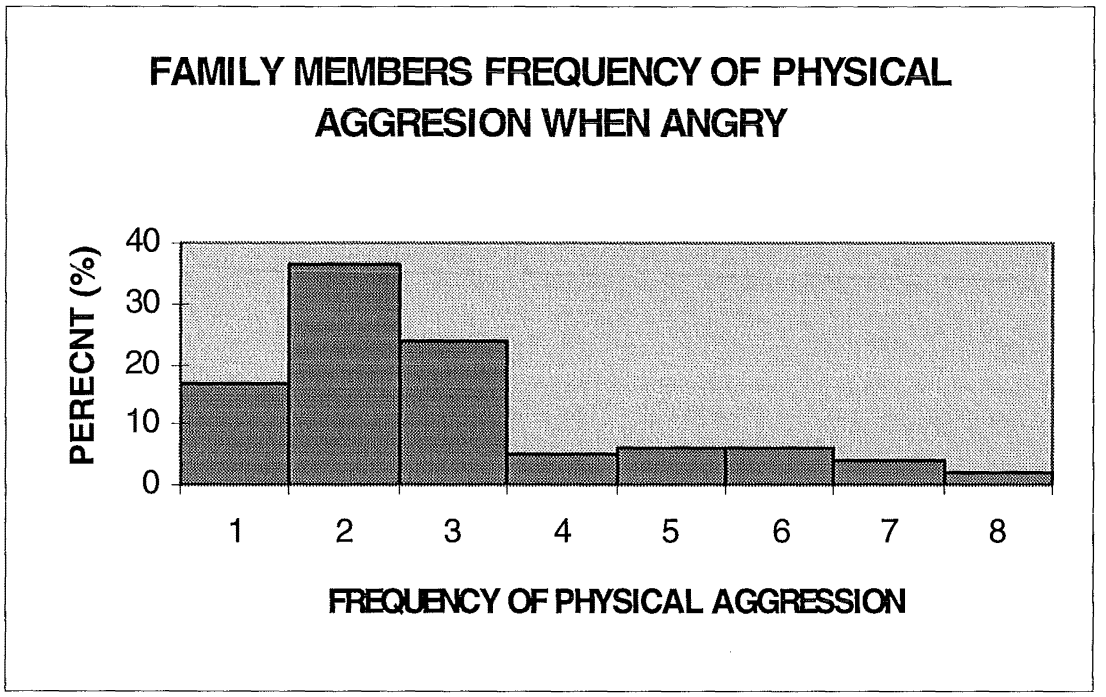
Most subjects reported that their family held a belief similar to their own, generally that angry feelings, if generated by another family member/s, should be disclosed to those responsible (48%). 13% of family's felt anger should be hidden. Finally, 39% of families were reported to hold the attitude that anger should be expressed dependent upon the situation.

SUBJECT ATTEMPTS TO HIDE ANGER FROM OUTSIDERS

Most subjects, 68%, reported that if they were angered by a non-family member (eg. a friend, a member of the public, a shop assistant etc.) they would make more of a conscious effort to hide their feelings of anger towards the target, and that they would be more likely to hide their anger from this person than if they had been angered by a member of their family. Fewer subjects, 32%, reported that they would be as likely to express their anger towards a non-family member target as they were to express their anger towards a family-member target.

FAMILY MEMBER DISPLAYS ANGER IN A PHYSICALLY AGGRESSIVE WAY

FIGURE 5



A 9 point Likhert scale was used to investigate the frequency of physical aggression by other family members in the subject's family (1=family member was never physically aggressive when angry; 9=family member was always physically aggressive when angry). A range of 1 to 8. The mean for this question was 2.90 (SD = 1.73).

The results indicate that by-in-large when a family member/s were physically aggressive it did not occur every time the person was angry. 60% of all subjects indicated that physical aggression infrequently accompanied family members anger. Over a fifth of all subjects reported that physical aggression frequently occurred in conjunction with displayed anger in family members. Interestingly though, a family member was no more likely to be perceived as being moderately aggressive as they were aggressive all-the-time.

Those subjects who reported that family member/s were physically aggressive when angry were asked to indicate the target of the aggression;

9.a ADULT FAMILY MEMBER

Physical aggression by a family member was not frequently directed towards an adult family member. 75% of subjects reported that when a family member was physically aggressive it was not directed towards an adult family member. Only 25% subjects reported that when members of their family were physically aggressive when angry that it was directed towards an adult family member.

9.b CHILD FAMILY MEMBER

When members of the subjects family were physically aggressive when angry they were more likely to direct the aggression towards a child. 53% of the subjects who reported that their family members were physically aggressive when angry reported that the physical aggression was sometimes directed towards a child.

9.c SUBJECT

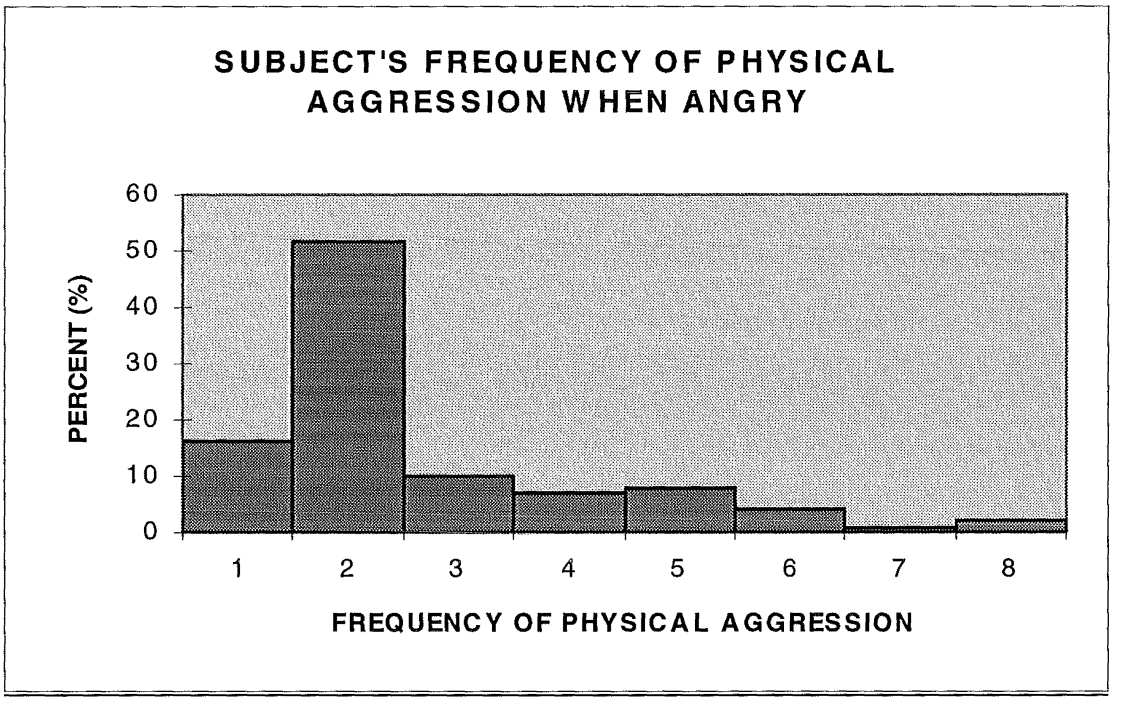
Subjects often reported that they were the target of physical aggression from other family members; 55% subjects that reported that a family member/s were physically aggressive when angry saw themselves as the target of the physical aggression. Slightly fewer, 45% subjects felt that physical aggression was directed towards other family members apart from themselves.

9.d INANIMATE OBJECT

43% of subjects said that their family members were physically aggressive towards inanimate objects, most, 58% of those subject that reported that their family members were physically aggressive when angry were no so towards inanimate objects. A family member was perceived as being as likely to be physically aggressive toward an inanimate object as they were toward a child family member.

10. SUBJECT PHYSICALLY AGGRESSIVE WHEN ANGRY

FIGURE 6



Most subjects (52%) reported that they were rarely physically aggressive when angry. The mean for the sample for this question was 2.68 (SD = 1.65). The range was 1 to 9 (1=the subject was never physically aggressive when angry; 9=subject was almost physically aggressive when angry).

Those subjects that reported that they were physically aggressive when angry were asked to indicate towards whom their aggression was directed;

10.a ADULT FAMILY MEMBER

Few subjects were physically aggressive towards an adult family member. 23% subjects that reported that they were physically aggressive when angry said that they were physically aggressive towards an adult family member. The majority of subjects that were physically aggressive when angry were not physically aggressive towards an adult family member (77%).

10.b CHILD FAMILY MEMBER

Few subjects reported that were angry and physically aggressive toward a child family member. Most (76% of subjects) reported that they were not physically aggressive towards a child family member.

10.c INANIMATE OBJECT

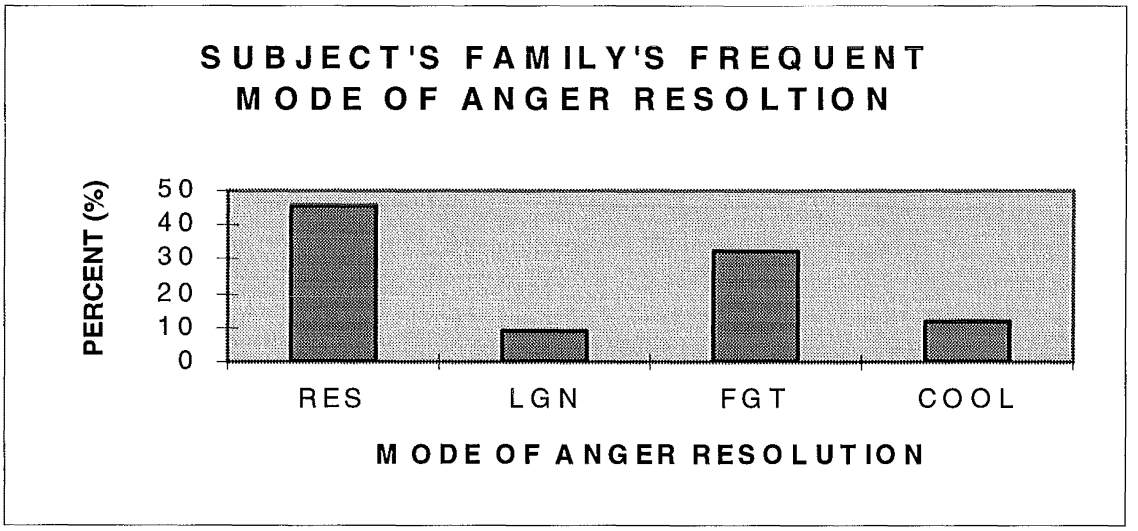
The majority of subjects saw their aggression as being directed towards an inanimate object. 64% of the subjects that reported that they were physically aggressive when angry said that their aggression was directed towards an inanimate object.

PARENTAL ANGRY URGES

Whilst most parents reported that they had had an angry urge, or an overwhelming desire to lash out at their child/ren (69.4%) a number did report they had never experienced such feelings (30.6%).

DURATION AND RESOLUTION OF FAMILY ANGER

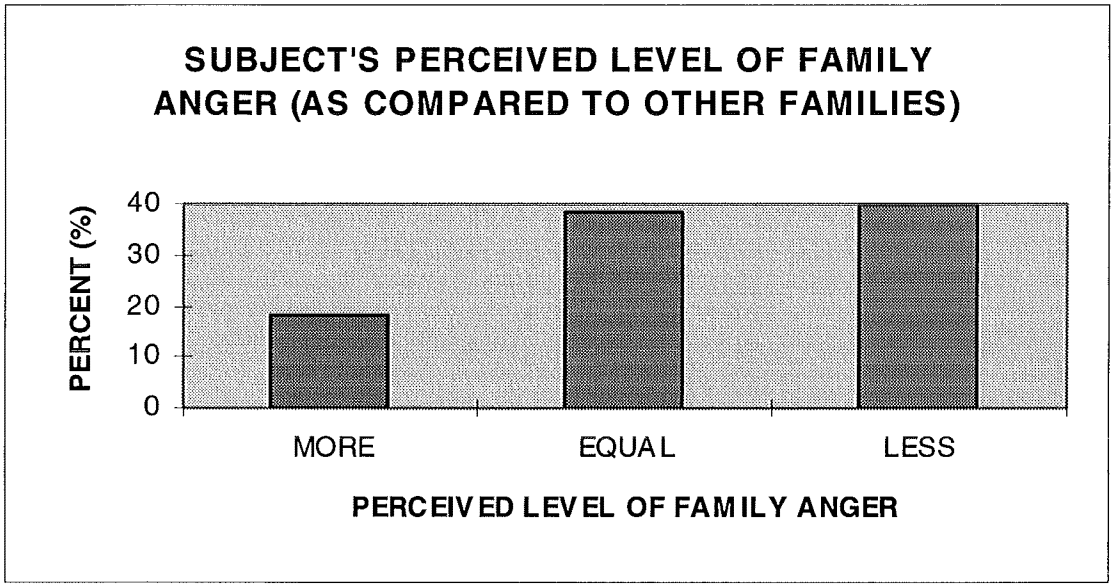
FIGURE 7



For the majority of families anger was addressed and resolved immediately (RES). 46% subjects reported that their family as a rule resolved angry feelings or situations which gave rise to anger "then-and-there". In addition 12% subjects reported that whilst their families did address an issue and attempted to find a constructive resolution that this was attempted only after an initial cool-down period (COOL). Thus over half of the sample reported that their families did address and resolve family anger. However, large proportion did report that their families did not address anger issues or angry feelings at all, that anger outbursts were forgotten and never addressed (FGT). 33% of subjects reported that this was the normal mode of resolution for their family. In addition 9% reported that the feelings of anger as raised in a family situation were not addressed and that the anger lingered for a long time (LNG), these families were characterised by a lengthy residual of family anger.

PERCEIVED LEVEL OF FAMILY ANGER

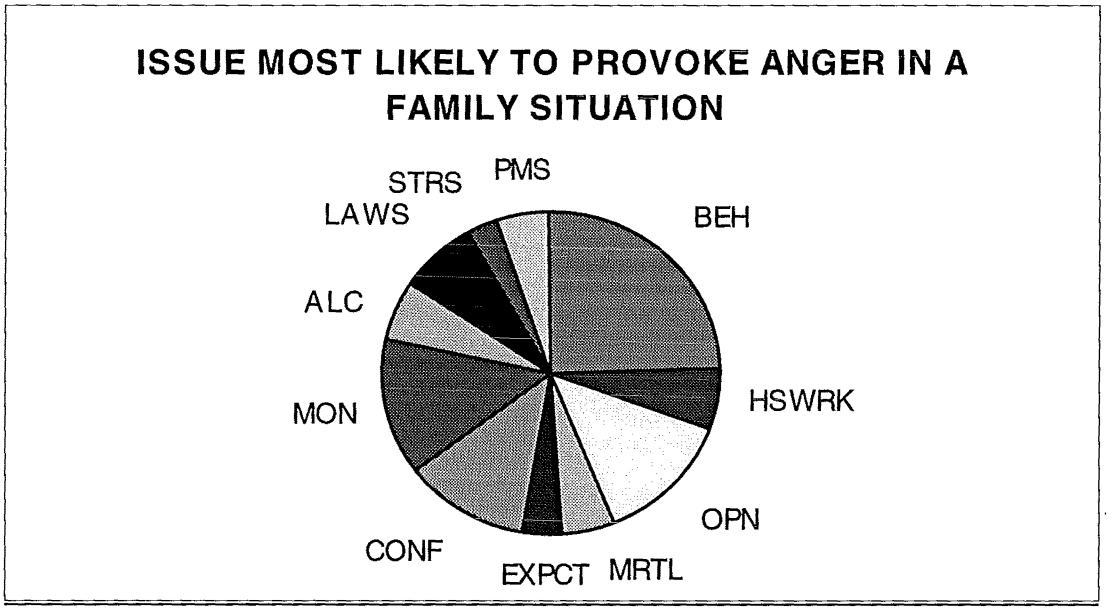
FIGURE 8



Most subjects perceived that their family displayed less anger than other families (LESS-43%), or the an equivalent amount of anger (EQUAL-39%). Few subjects reported that their families displayed more anger than other families. 18% of families reported that the level in the family was greater than their perceptions of anger levels in other families (MORE).

CAUSES OF FAMILY ANGER

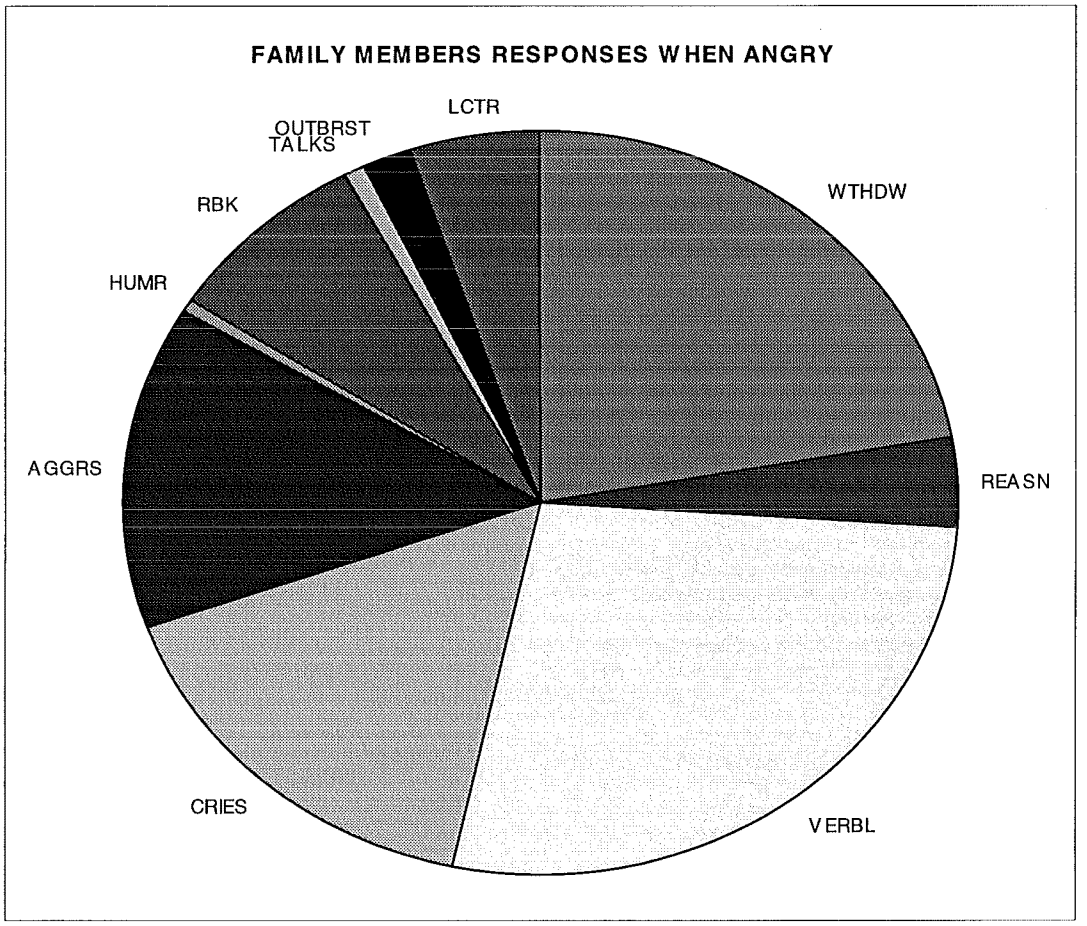
FIGURE 9



Families were most likely to experience anger over the behaviour or attitudes of another family member (BEH-23%). Other issues which were likely to cause family anger were money (MON), political or social issues outside the family (OPN) and parent-child conflict (CONF). Small numbers of subjects became angered by housework delegations (HSWRK), marital issues (MRTL), alcohol (ALC), family members, the "in-laws"(LAWS) and hormonal problems of female family members (PMS).

BEHAVIOURAL RESPONSES OF SUBJECT'S FAMILY MEMBERS WHEN ANGRY

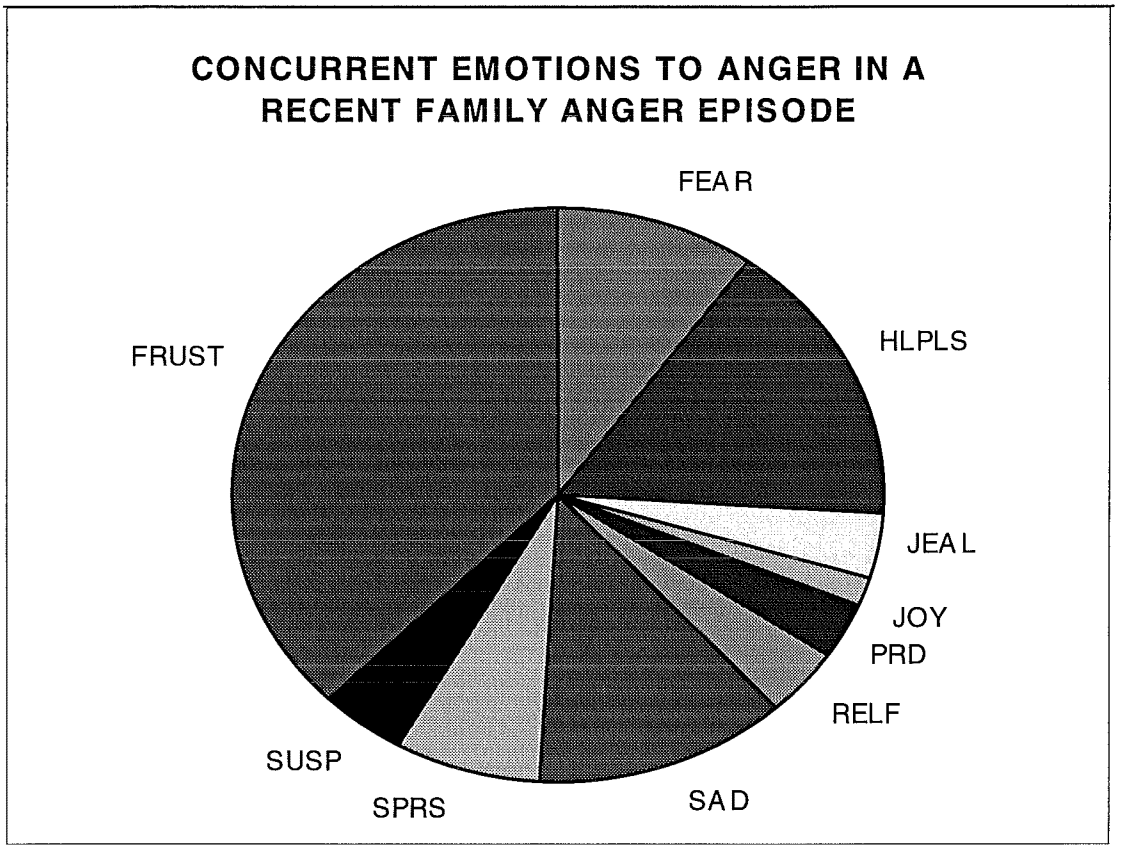
FIGURE 10



The forms of response by other family members was generally described as conflictual. Family members were viewed as verbally conflictual when angry (VERBL-28%), aggressive (AGGRS-16%) or rude and critical (RBK-9%). Tears (CRIES) was also frequently mentioned as a common response (16%). A small number of subjects felt that family members explained, or discussed reasonably the issues with them (REASN-5.3%)-more were seen to withdraw (WTHDW-22%). Very few family members tried to pacify, redirect or use humour to alter the situation (HUMR-0.5%), nor did a large number talk about the issue to non-family members (TALKS-1.2%). Outbursts followed by no conflict were rare (OUTBRST-2%).

OTHER EMOTIONS EXPERIENCED WHEN ANGRY

FIGURE 11



When asked to think back to the most recent experience of anger within the family most subjects (95.3%) reported that they experienced another emotion when they were angry.

Further when asked to comment on what sort of 'other' emotion was experienced in conjunction with anger, 3 predominant emotions emerged. Feelings of frustration (FRUST), helplessness (HLPLS), and sadness (SAD) were frequently associated as occurring in conjunction with anger. A sizeable number of subjects also reported being 'fearful' (FEAR) when angry in a recent family situation. Emotions such as joy, pride, relief, jealousy and suspicion were mentioned but were not common.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FAMILY AND INDIVIDUAL VARIABLES WHICH INFLUENCE THE EXPERIENCE OF ANGER IN THE HOME

These above variables were tested to investigate potential relationships between subject variables and family variables, such that would provide support for the assertions regarding social constructivism and the experience of emotions in the family.

8.2 INDIVIDUAL VARIABLES WHICH INFLUENCE FAMILY FUNCTIONING WHEN ANGRY

AGE

No significant relationships between subject age (young person [20 or under], or adult [over 20]) and the frequency of angry feelings in a family situation (x^2 (1, N = 101) = .45, ns); the frequency of family anger episodes (x^2 (1, N = 100) = .1, n.s.); the degree of control a subject had over their cognitions when angry (x^2 (2, N = 101) = .12, n.s.); or the degree of control a subject had over their behaviour when angry (x^2 (2, N = 101) = .12, n.s.), were found.

Subject age was most strongly correlated with subject attitude toward informing family members when they had cause feelings of anger (x^2 (2, N = 101) = 19.51, $p < .001$). Crammer's phi correlation coefficient (ϕ_c) was .44 indicating that there is a moderate degree of association between subject age and the subject's attitude towards expressing their anger towards family members who have provoked anger.

TABLE 1
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Age x Attitude of Disclosure of Angry Feelings

		SUBJECT'S ATTITUDE		
		Inform	Hide	Depends
AGE	Young people	-1.8	2.9	1.1
	Adults	1.5	-2.2	-0.9

Youngsters were likely to hold the belief that angry feelings towards family members should be hidden, or expressed dependent upon the situation. Standardised residuals indicate a significant number of youngsters believed they should withhold the information that

a family member had provoked angry feelings, and were likely to weigh-up the situation making a decision as to the benefits, or not, of informing a family member of their feelings, before expressing anger. Adults were less likely to think of situational constraints and did not believe their feelings should be hidden from provoking family members. Instead, adults were significantly more likely to believe that family members should be informed when they had caused anger.

The reported frequency of physical aggression when angry was found to be dependent upon subject age (x^2 (2, N = 101) = 9.76, p < .05). Cramer's phi (ϕ_c) was .31. This is indicative of a modest association between a subject's frequency of physical aggression when angry in a family situation and his/her age.

TABLE 2
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Age x Frequency of Physical Aggression

		PHYSICAL AGGRESSION WHEN ANGRY		
		Rarely	Sometimes	Almost Always
AGE	Young People	-1.18	2.01	0.71
	Adults	0.9	-1.62	-0.58

Whilst few subject's reported physical aggression regularly accompanied their angry feelings towards a family member, young people were only slightly more likely to report they were always physically aggressive than were adults, but were significantly more likely to report they had a moderate level of physical aggression when angry at a family member. Adults demonstrated the opposite; they showed a movement away from reporting that they expressed their anger in a family environment in a physically aggressive way, and were more likely to see themselves as not being physically aggressive when angry.

Subject age was modestly correlated (Cramer's phi (ϕ_c) was 0.28) with a subject's perception of the perceived level of family anger (x^2 (2, N = 93) = 7.46, p < .05).

TABLE 3
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Age x Perceived Level of Family Anger

		PERCEIVED LEVEL OF FAMILY ANGER		
		More Anger	Same Amount	Less Anger
AGE	Young People	1.45	0.49	-1.41
	Adults	-1.26	-0.42	1.2

There was a considerable positively skew towards more young people reporting that the level of anger displayed in their family was greater than that displayed by other families. Conversely, adults moved away from reporting that the level of anger in their homes was the same or more than other families and showed a tendency to report that their family showed less anger than other families. Subsequent analysis of the contingency table of 'subject age x reason's subject gave for informing family members that they had created anger' showed that three times as many adults (as compared to young people) felt that the provocateur of anger should be informed when they had created angry feelings, in order to ensure a positive and constructive outcome could be worked towards. Adults were twice as likely as young people to feel that the ventilation or the catharsis of angry feelings. Conversely, young people showed a preference for hiding their feelings of anger towards provocative family members, over a quarter of young people reported that angry feelings towards a family member who had caused the anger should be hidden (almost double the proportion of adults who felt the same way). Young people were three times more likely to cite the probable outcome as being the most important factor in determining whether or not angry feelings should be expressed towards a provoking family member, believing that anger should only be expressed to provoking family members if there would be a favourable outcome for the subject.

GENDER

No significant relationships were found between subject gender (female or male) and the frequency of angry feelings in a family situation during the last week (x^2 (1, $\underline{N}$ = 101) = 1.19, n.s.); the frequency of family anger episodes during the last week (x^2 (1, $\underline{N}$ = 100) = .06, n.s.); the degree of control over cognitions, mental thoughts, and images when angry (x^2 (2, $\underline{N}$ = 101) = 1.98, n.s.), or the frequency of physical aggression (x^2 (2, $\underline{N}$ = 101) = 3.15, n.s.).

However, a subject's ability to control the outward expression of anger when angry was dependent on gender (x^2 (2, $\underline{N}$ = 101) = 7.44, $p < .05$). Cramer's phi correlation coefficient

(ϕ_c) was 0.27, indicating the gender played a modest role in determining the level of control an individual had over his/her actions, facial expressions, tone-of-voice et cetera, when angry.

TABLE 4
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Gender x Control of Overt Expressions

		CONTROL OF OVERT EXPRESSIONS		
		Complete	Moderate	No control
GENDER	Male	1.34	-1.5	-0.36
	Female	-1.17	1.33	0.32

Males demonstrated a large positive movement towards reporting that they were in complete control of their actions and expressions when angry (almost three-quarters reported that they were in complete control of their actions when angry) and away from reporting any loss-of-control of their expression of anger. Females, however, showed a positive skew towards reporting that they had only a moderate level of control over their actions and were unlikely to report that they had control of their actions when angry.

ETHNICITY

No significant relationships between subject ethnicity (Pakeha or Maori) and the frequency of physical aggression in the family (x^2 (2, N = 84) = 0.76, n.s.); the duration and resolution styles of the subject's family (x^2 (3, N = 90) = 0.57, n.s.); or the frequency of family anger episodes (x^2 (1, N = 82) = 3.06, n.s.) were found (though a non-significant trend toward reporting that Maori family's experienced less frequent episodes of family anger)

The frequency of angry feelings in a family situation during the last week was dependent on ethnic identity (x^2 (1, N = 83) = 19.51, $p < .001$). Phi (ϕ) for subject's ethnicity x frequency of angry feelings in a family situation during the last week was 0.24.

TABLE 5
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Ethnicity x Frequency of Angry Feelings

		ETHNICITY	
		Pakeha	Maori
FREQUENCY OF ANGRY FEELINGS	Frequent	0.59	-1.68
	Infrequent	-0.4	1.13

European subject's that reported frequent instances of angry feelings in a family situation did not differ significantly from the number of European subject's which experienced infrequent angry feelings in a family situation. However, whilst there was a number of European, or Pakeha, subject's which reported a relatively high tendency towards frequent

anger feelings (35% had feelings of anger in a family situation at least once per day during the last 7 days) no subject that identified themself as Maori reported frequent feelings of anger in a family situation during the last week. Maori subjects instead showed a definite and significant negative movement away from reporting frequent feelings of anger and moved instead towards reporting less frequent instances of angry feelings in a family situation during the last week.

SUBJECT'S FREQUENCY OF ANGER IN THE PAST 7 DAYS:

Non significant relationships were found between the subject's frequency of angry feelings and their reported control of actions and expressions when angry (x^2 (2, N = 101) = 4.75, n.s.) or the subject's degree of control over cognitions, mental thoughts, and images when angry (x^2 (2, N = 101) = 3.87, n.s.).

A significant relationship between the level of physical aggression accompanying feelings of anger in the subject and the reported frequency of subject's angry feelings in a family situation was found (x^2 (2, N = 101) = 5.81, $p < .05$). Cramer's phi was 0.24. This coefficient indicates a modest level of correlation between the subject's frequency of physical aggression and his/her frequency of angry feelings in a family situation.

TABLE 6
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Frequency of Angry Feelings x Frequency of Physical Aggression

		FREQUENCY OF PHYSICAL AGGRESSION		
		Rarely	Sometimes	Almost Always
FREQUENCY OF ANGRY FEELINGS	Frequent	-0.95	1.72	0.38
	Infrequent	0.64	-1.15	-0.25

Those subject's that reported physical aggression always, or almost always, accompanied their feelings of anger in a family situation showed a significant movement towards reporting that they experienced frequent feelings of anger in a family situation during the last week. (61% of those subjects who had frequent instances of angry feelings during the last week expressed frequently were physically aggressive to some degree). These subject's showed a significant movement towards reporting that they would sometimes express their anger in a physically aggressive way when angry within a family situation . Subjects that reported

infrequent feelings of anger in a family situation reported that physical aggression never, or almost never accompanied their feelings of anger in a family situation.

8.3 FAMILY VARIABLES WHICH INFLUENCE FAMILY FUNCTIONING WHEN ANGRY

FAMILY STRUCTURE

No significant relationships were found between a subjects family structure [two-parent intact, single parent, and one-parent one-adult occupying parental role families] and the frequency of personal angry feelings (x^2 (2, N = 99) = 1.5, n.s.); or the duration and resolution mode of family anger (x^2 (6, N = 99) = 6.18, n.s.).

A significant relationship between family structure and frequency of family anger episodes was found (x^2 (2, N = 98) = 7.23, $p < .05$). Cramer's phi correlation coefficient (ϕ_c) was 0.28 indicating there was a modest level of correlation between subject family structure and the reported frequency of family anger.

TABLE 7
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Family Structure x Frequency of Family Anger Episodes

		FREQUENCY OF FAMILY ANGER EPISODES	
		Infrequent	Frequent
FAMILY STRUCTURE	Two-parents Intact	-0.93	1.14
	Single Parent	1.03	-1.27
	Parent and Step Parent	0.96	-1.18

Whilst two-parent intact families reported more frequent instances of family anger; families where there was only one natural parent present (regardless of the presence of another adult who may be occupying the role of a parent) were more likely to report infrequent family anger episodes.

Family structure was also significantly related to the issues which caused family anger (x^2 (8, N = 99) = 15.24, $p < .05$). Cramer's correlation coefficient (ϕ_c) was 0.34 representing a

moderate relationship between the subject's family structure and the issues which cause family anger.

TABLE 8
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Family Structure x Issue Most Likely to Cause Family Anger

		ISSUE MOST LIKELY TO CREATE FAMILY ANGER				
		Behaviour/Attitudes	Differences of Opinion	Marital Issues	Parent-child Conflict	Money
FAMILY STRUCTURE	Two-parents Intact	0.1	-1.00	0.71	0.16	0.3
	Single Parent	0.7	-1.00	-0.55	-1.05	1.23
	Parent-Step Parent	-0.68	2.44	-0.84	0.46	-0.65

All families were likely to be angered by the behaviour and attitudes of other family members. A significantly disproportionate number of step-families were angered by differences of family members opinions. The beliefs of family members (both with regard to social/political issues and issues within the family) were a significant cause for much family anger. No one issue stood out as the factor that would generate family anger in two-parent intact families though two-parent intact families did show a slight negative movement away from being angered by individual family member's opinions and beliefs and a slightly increased susceptibility towards being angered by marital issues. Single-parent families on the other hand were most frequently angered by money issues. So too, were they less likely to become angry about interpersonal conflicts (marital issues and parent-child conflicts were not a frequent cause of anger for single-parent families).

FREQUENCY OF FAMILY ANGER:

No significant relationship between the frequency of family anger and the perceived degree of control over cognitions, mental images and thoughts when angry (x^2 (2, N = 100) = .55, n.s.); the duration and resolution mode of the family (x^2 (4, N = 100) = 9.99, n.s.).

The subject's reported frequency of personal angry feelings was dependent on the frequency of family anger episodes (x^2 (1, N = 100) = 36.02, $p < .001$). Phi correlation

coefficient (ϕ) was 0.60. This correlation coefficient indicates that 60% of the variance in the frequency of personal angry feelings was attributable to the frequency of family anger.

TABLE 9
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Frequency of Angry Feelings x Frequency of Family Anger

		FREQUENCY OF FAMILY ANGER	
		Frequent	Infrequent
FREQUENCY OF ANGRY FEELINGS	Frequent	3.86	-3.15
	Infrequent	-2.59	2.12

Subject's were very likely to report that the frequency of personal anger experiences in a family situation matched their family's experiences of anger during the last week. 84% of subjects who reported frequent feelings of anger in a family situation during the last week also reported frequent episodes of family anger, though, almost a fifth (16%) reported that the frequency of their own personal angry feelings was higher than the frequency of family anger episodes. Those subject's who reported a low frequency of personal angry feelings were also most likely to report that their family had fewer incidences of anger during the last week (80%). Of the subjects who reported few instances of personal anger in a family situation 20% reported that they came from homes were there were frequent anger episodes within the family during the past week.

Family age and the frequency of reported family anger episodes during the last week were significantly related (x^2 (1, N = 100) = 4.07, $p < .05$). Cramer's phi (ϕ_c) was 0.20. This correlation coefficient represents a weak correlation indicating that the age of a family played a modest role in determining the frequency of family anger episodes.

TABLE 10
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Family Age x Frequency of Family Anger Episodes

		FREQUENCY OF FAMILY ANGER	
		Frequent	Infrequent
FAMILY AGE	Young Children	1.23	-1.01
	Adolescents/Adults	-0.96	0.79

Young families were more likely to report frequent family anger episodes during the last week and showed a movement away from reporting infrequent family anger episodes whereas families with older children had a tendency to report infrequent instances of family anger.

The level of control a subject had over their overt expressions when angry was significantly related to the frequency of family anger episodes (x^2 (2, N = 100) = 7.43, p < .05). Cramer's phi (ϕ_c) was 0.27, indicating a modest level of association between the two variables.

TABLE 11
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Control over Overt Expressions x Frequency of Family Anger

		FREQUENCY OF FAMILY ANGER	
		Frequent	Infrequent
DEGREE OF CONTROL OVER OVERT EXPRESSIONS	Complete	-1.35	1.10
	Moderate	1.05	-1.85
	No Control	1.24	-1.01

Subject's who came from families where there were frequent instances of family anger during the last week tended to report that they had moderate to little control over their overt expressions when angry whereas those subject's who reported less frequent instances of family anger where more likely to report they had complete control over their overt expressions when angry.

The perceived level of family anger was significantly related to the frequency of family anger (x^2 (2, N = 92) = 9.74, p < .01). Cramer's phi (ϕ_c) was 0.33. This correlation coefficient represents a modest level of correlation between a subject's perception of the level of family anger was influenced to a moderate degree by the frequency of family anger.

TABLE 12
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Frequency of Family Anger x Perceived Level of Family Anger

		PERCEIVED LEVEL OF FAMILY ANGER		
		More	The Same	Less
FREQUENCY OF FAMILY ANGER	Frequent	-0.92	0.67	-1.69
	Infrequent	-1.31	-0.54	1.39

Subjects who experienced frequent family anger episodes tended to report that their family showed the same amount of anger as, compared to other families, whereas subject's that experienced infrequent family anger were most likely to report that their family showed less anger than other families.

The types of issues which provoked family anger when raised were significantly related to the frequency of family anger (x^2 (5, N = 64) = 12.0, p < .05). Cramer's phi (ϕ_c) was 0.42, indicating a moderate level of correlation between the two variables.

TABLE 13
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Frequency of Family Anger x Issue Most Likely to Cause Family Anger

		ISSUE MOST LIKELY TO CAUSE FAMILY ANGER				
		Behaviour/ Attitudes	Marital Issues	Parent-Child Conflict	Money	Alcohol
FREQUENCY OF FAMILY ANGER	Frequent	0.8	-1.17	1.16	-0.72	-1.16
	Infrequent	-1.03	0.9	-1.12	0.56	1.0

Subject's from families where anger episodes were infrequent were more likely to generate issues which could be defined as 'serious' as the issue most likely to create anger when raised in a family situation. For instance, subjects which reported less frequent family anger episodes were three times more likely to cite alcohol as an issue which created family anger than were subjects which reported frequent family anger episodes. Further, they were twice as likely to cite money as a major issue which would provoke family anger. Conversely, families where anger episodes were frequent occurrences were more likely to cite day-to-day conflicts as causing family anger, for instance parent-child conflicts, children not doing their jobs/homework, parents not letting their children go out, provocative behaviours and attitudes of family members etc.

A investigation into the relationship between the frequency of physical aggression in family members and the frequency of physical aggression in the subjects was significant (x^2 (4, N = 101) = 10.3, p < .05). Cramer's phi (ϕ_c) was 0.23 indicating a modest level of association between a subject's level of physical aggression in a family situation and by the parallel behaviour of family members.

TABLE 14
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Frequency of Physical Aggression x Family Members Frequency of Physical Aggression

		FAMILY MEMBERS FREQUENCY OF PHYSICAL AGGRESSION		
		Rarely	Sometimes	Almost Always
SUBJECT'S LEVEL OF PHYSICAL AGGRESSION	Rarely	0.77	-1.18	-0.58
	Sometimes	-1.09	1.81	0.59
	Almost Always	-0.89	1.09	1.19

The level of physical aggression in the subject was positively correlated with the level of physical aggression in family members. Those subjects that reported high levels of physical aggression accompanied their feelings of anger in a family situation were most likely to report moderate-high levels of physical aggression in their family members. Subjects that reported that they were rarely physically aggressive showed a moderate movement away from reporting that their family members expressed anger with physical aggression.

MODE OF SUBJECT'S EXPRESSION TO PROVOCATIVE FAMILY MEMBERS

An analysis was carried out to see if subject's themselves treated, or saw each family members differently when angry. A significant relationship was found (x^2 (12, N = 98) = 22.5, $p < .05$). Cramer's phi (ϕ_c) for reported behaviour dependent on the identity of family member was 0.35. How a subject responded when angered by a family member who had provoked them was dependent upon the family position of the provocateur.

TABLE 15
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Subject's reported behaviour towards a specific family member that has caused them anger

		SUBJECT'S BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS FAMILY MEMBER TREATED DIFFERENTLY				
		Withdraws hides anger	Reasons	Verbally Conflictual	Cries	Aggressive
FAMILY MEMBER TREATED DIFFERENTLY	Mother/ Wife	0.23	1.38	-1.49	0.43	-1.11
	Husband/ father	1.14	-0.92	-0.62	0.65	-1.31
	Daughter/ sister	-1.02	0.07	1.07	-1.25	2.35
	Son/ brother	-0.68	-0.49	1.45	0.13	0.31

If provoked by a family member angry feelings were most likely to be directed toward the provocateur if he, or she was a child, whereas if the provocateur had been an adult (parent or spouse) angry feelings were most likely to be hidden or suppressed. Consequently subjects were more likely to engage in verbal conflict and physical aggression with child family members than they were with parents, towards whom anger was generally either explained (mothers/wives) or hidden (fathers/husbands). Further, dependent upon position certain responses were most likely to be directed toward particular family members;

1. MOTHER/WIFE; Subject's were most likely to approach their mother/wife, if angered by her, and attempt to find a resolution through explaining and discussing their feelings. Mothers/wives also were slightly more likely to experience tears from other family members. Verbal conflict and physical aggression were unlikely to be directed towards a mother, or wife as a response to her anger-provoking behaviour.

2. FATHER/HUSBAND; A father was more likely to be the respondent of tears by another family member when he had behaved, or spoken in such a way as to provoke anger. However, subject's were nor likely to report they withdrew their anger from their father/husband without attempting to find a resolution. Other family members were unlikely to be physically aggressive towards the father-figure, or to engage him in verbal battles.

3. DAUGHTERS/SISTERS; Females occupying the position of a child within a family were most likely to be treated in a physically aggressive or verbally conflictual way. This movement towards being physically aggressive towards female children was significant and equivalent to being over standard deviations from the mean. Indeed physical aggression was most likely to be directed toward a female child. Lastly, subjects were unlikely to hide their anger or cry when they were angered by female child in their family.

4. SONS/BROTHERS; Anger was generally not hidden from a male child. Sons, and brothers who had provoked angry feelings of others were most likely to be engaged in verbal conflict with the subject. Levels of physical aggression and the tendency to cry when provoked by a male child were only slightly more likely than expected to occur. Attempts to reason or explain anger to a son was less likely to be evident.

BELIEFS ABOUT DISCLOSURE TO FAMILY MEMBERS OF ANGRY FEELINGS

A chi-square analysis investigating the hypothesised relationship between the subject's personally held beliefs as compared to the familial attitude regarding the disclosure of angry feelings to family members yielded a significant result (x^2 (4, N = 98) = 14.5, p < .01). Cramer's correlation coefficient (ϕ_c) was 0.61. This represents a strong relationship between the subjects attitude towards the expression of anger and the subject's family's attitude. Thus 60% of the variance in the subject's belief regarding the expression of anger in a family situation was determined by his/her family's attitude.

TABLE 16
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for Subject's Belief Regarding Informing Family Members when they have Caused Anger x Family's Reported Belief

		FAMILY'S BELIEF		
		Tell Family Member Responsible	Hide Anger	Depends on the Situation
SUBJECT'S BELIEF	Tell Family Member Responsible	0.76	-0.97	-0.56
	Hide Anger	-2.19	-2.51	2.42
	Depends on the Situation	0.31	0.46	-0.67

Those subjects who came from families which held the belief that anger should be expressed were likely to hold the same personal belief. 69% of those subject who felt if you were angry you should let your family know, reported that they came from families who held a similar belief. An interesting and significant trend for those subject's that reported that they believed anger should be hidden from their family members was found. Rather than having a similar attitude their families demonstrated a significant movement towards reporting that their familial attitude was towards expressing anger dependent on the situational constraints. Lastly, those subject's that reported that anger should be expressed to family members dependent on the situation were fairly evenly distributed over the three family variables, that for those subjects who were likely to believe that anger expression was dependent on situational constraints were not likely to be influenced by familial view.

FAMILY MEMBERS RESPONSES WHEN ANGRY

Chi-squared analyses were carried out to investigate the relationship between the way a subject described the behaviour of family members when angry and the position of specific family members.

A significant, if complex, relationship between the behaviour of family members and their position within the family was found (x^2 (15, N = 353) = 119.69, $p < .001$). Cramer's phi (ϕ_c) for the behaviour of family members x the family members position within the family was 0.34. Analysis of the standard residuals (Table ???) revealed that family members behaviour when angry was determined by their position. That is to say how a family member was seen to behave was dependent upon their place within the family. Movement, when it occurred, was generally very disproportionate and significant. Thus it emerged that certain types of emotional behaviour were readily associated with the angry behaviour of specific family members.

TABLE 17
STANDARDISED RESIDUALS for behaviour of family members when angry x family member's position within the family

		BEHAVIOUR OF FAMILY MEMBER					
		Withdrawal	Explains lecturers	Verbally conflictual	Tears	Physically aggressive	No resolution
FAMILY MEMBER'S POSITION	Female parent	-1.62	4.87	0.28	-0.52	-2.96	-0.47
	Male Parent	3.19	-1.37	1.44	-3.6	-1.31	1.07
	Female Child	1.03	-1.84	-1.77	3.56	-0.74	-0.74
	Male Child	-1.89	-1.77	-1.6	1.2	4.79	-0.01

1. MOTHER/WIFE; Subjects demonstrated a significant movement away from seeing, and/or describing, the behaviour of mothers/wives when angry as physically aggressive. A similar reluctance to recall that their mother, or wife, withdrew, or became passive when she was angry was evident. A significantly large movement (equivalent to almost 5 standard deviations from the mean) was found in the reporting that mothers/wives tended to explain or lecture when angry at family members (seen as the most common emotional response of

mothers when angry). Mothers were more likely than fathers or sons to search for a resolution.

2. FATHER/HUSBAND; Subjects showed a very sizeable and significant move towards describing their father, or husband's, response when angry as withdrawing, again this was sizeable (equivalent to over 3 standard deviations from the mean). An equivalent movement towards describing fathers, or husbands behaviour when angry as responding with tears was found. Finally, the other notable trend was the tendency to describe the behaviour of fathers/husbands when angry as verbally conflictual and unlikely to lead to, or desiring of finding, a resolution. Subjects did not tend to see or describe father/husband behaviour when angry as lecturing or physically aggressive.

3. DAUGHTERS/SISTERS; Subjects were very likely to report that their sisters/daughters cried when angry (a standardised residual comparable to over 3 standard deviations from the mean was found), and a smaller, though still significant movement towards reporting that daughter's, or sisters, withdrew when angry was also evident. Female children were seen as being non-conflictual, non-aggressive and as not addressing or explaining their anger within a family situation and were the most likely of all family members to search for a resolution to family anger.

4. SONS/BROTHERS; Sons, or male children within a family were most likely to be described as physically aggressive when angry (a very large, significant, movement towards this was found; equivalent to almost 5 standard deviations from the mean). Sons, or brothers were said to respond with tears more frequently than mothers and fathers but not than sisters/daughters. Sons/brothers were also unlikely to be seen as being verbally conflictual. Neither were they seen to withdraw when angry or attempt an explanation of their feelings.

9.

DISCUSSION

"Several days ago I got really angry one morning and felt angry for several hours because of the situation I'm in where everything seems so difficult and awkward and I feel scared and trapped and alone, nothing seems to work out and I feel responsible and all over the place. It makes me angry to be alive and not to be able to find peace or space and being a woman seems so hard. I recognise that in a sense I am reliving a difficult period from my childhood brought to the surface by recent events but this does not lessen the anger and frustration I feel at times. I do blame my husband and son sometimes because their care of me and concern for me forces me to confront and go through some of these feelings. I get especially angry at my periods" (Subject 89, mother).

Recall that initially two questions were posed regarding the experience of emotions within the family; firstly, what is the nature of emotions?, and, secondly, what purpose or function do they serve? The analysis of the results provides an overall picture of family functioning, and its purpose, when angry.

9.1 A GENERATED NORMATIVE PICTURE OF A FAMILY'S EXPERIENCE OF ANGER: OR "HOW MOST FAMILIES EXPERIENCE ANGER"

From the results a generalised picture of the "average" family experience of anger emerges. Previous research (e.g., Averill, 1982; Vuchinich et al., 1988) which indicates that anger is most commonly found in the home, and that people are most frequently angered by members of their families appears to have been upheld by this research. Anger is a relatively frequent experience for most families and is perceived as a highly emotional event, capable of affecting the individual's ability to function on a normal level (e.g., *"I was too angry to talk", Subject 37, mother).* Whilst few families regularly spend social time together on a daily basis together they experience instances of anger more frequently, with most families experiencing daily anger episodes; most commonly due to the behaviour and attitudes of other family members.

This result indicate that anger is an important, even a vital, part of a family social interactions; anger allows family members to test, re-evaluate and solidify their understanding of how their family functions. Indeed even though most families experience anger frequently, subjects from these families demonstrate a significant bias towards the belief that their family shows less anger than other families, possibly indicating that in some way subjects perceive the functioning of their family when angry as 'superior', or more effective, than other families and that anger originates from an external cause rather than from within the family (i.e., an external locus of control).

When angered by another person, people are more likely to express their anger if the target is family than if the provocateur is a member of the public. This may be because the family represents a closely bound haven of sorts, where most people feel safe and secure. The expression of anger to a loved one may be perceived as less threatening to the self than the perceived outcome of expressing anger to someone not known, or a friend. Further due to the repetitive pattern of anger expressions we may be in a better position to make judgements about the probable outcomes of anger expression in a family environment than in non-family setting. More of our 'projected self' (the image of oneself that we project to others) may be vulnerable when angry at non-family members.

Whilst many people believe that if they have been provoked by another family member they should reveal their feelings (*"I feel that releasing anger is better than bottling it up; Subject 10, mother)*, many indicate that they do not express their anger, or express their anger dependent on situational factors; the most salient of which is in order to protect the self *("sometimes it is best just to ignore them", Subject 6, son).* Anger may also be hidden if the person who provokes the subject is perceived as reactive, and likely to become angry in return. Growth, resolution and the importance of sharing feelings and informing one another of anger are cited as reasons why angry feelings should be expressed; *"we are part of a family and should share most things because we have to live together" (Subject 7, father).* A number of subjects report that their families encourage the expression and resolution of anger, though many also appeared to have constructed the family belief that anger should only be expressed if a positive outcome was probable.

Angry feelings are by-and-large resolved immediately, sometimes following a brief 'cool down' period, (*" I have always tried to . . .calm down before talking it over with them" Subject 87, father).* Most subjects report that their family finds, through the process of talking about a provocative issue, a constructive family solution. However whilst this is characteristic of most families, two other common modes of anger resolution and duration within families are evident; 1 in 8 family members report that anger lingers unaddressed for a long time (thereby

allowing for the possibility that anger and resentment could harbour and multiply), further, 1 in 3 report that following an initial heated outburst of anger the issue is forgotten, or put behind the family with little, or no consequences. Thus three main styles of how families cope with anger emerge; (a) address anger, (b) ignore but not forget, and (c) heated outburst with no resolution and no residual anger. On a face value if all family members accept and function with the above modes, the second category (ignore but do not forget) has the most potential to be dysfunctional.

Almost all people report a negative response from family members to their anger, which most frequently leads to an escalation of the conflict. Few family members withdraw or attempt to redirect the anger of other family members through humour. Even fewer (only 4%) report that angry feelings are most generally reasoned or talked through. Families become argumentative, critical, and often yell and scream when anger is expressed by a family member. These responses are also frequently accompanied by crying, and sometimes physical aggression.

Thus whilst families perceive they find a solution to family anger, it would appear that the process through which this is achieved is not necessarily so 'friendly'. Rather, even though families do resolve anger and perceive that they experience anger less frequently than other families, the mode of everyday anger expression and resolution within a family does not usually occur through 'polite' discussion. Anger within the family is usually dealt with in a highly emotionally charged, and at first appearances, random, way. This is not to say that this mode is unconstructive, or even dysfunctional.

However, anger does manifest itself in some families in ways considered inappropriate by society. Even though physical aggression is a relatively uncommon experience for most families, a number of families and individuals do experience physical aggression during exchanges of anger. Over 12% report that physical aggression commonly occurs either on a personal level or in other family members following anger. This may reflect old parenting

attitudes, as one mother put it, a "*smack . . . hurts their pride more than anything else" (Subject 100, mother).* 6% of subjects feel that physical aggression is the usual response of family members to their expression of anger. These results indicate that aggression still frequently occurs in many families, and that many people see aggression as a natural extension of angry feelings. If we recall that a large volume of research indicates that aggression and anger are not synonymous (Averill, 1982; Novaco, 1976; Speilberger et al., 1985) and that one does not necessarily assume the existence of the other (e.g., Rule & Leger, 1976; Rule & Nesdale, 1974) the results are disturbing.

When one looks at the target of aggression a more startling picture emerges. Physical aggression is overwhelmingly directed toward family members who are not in positions of power. The targets of physical aggression occupy largely passive and subordinate roles within the family, children most commonly being the target. Physical aggression is rarely directed toward adult family members. Thus children appear to become the proverbial communal family punching bag. Even though the severity of the aggression has not been measured herein, the overall indication is that aggression is still frequent in a number of homes and that the most common targets of aggression are children.

The effects of this pattern of behaviour toward a youngster, who in turn may model and imitate the behaviour of their aggressive parents on their own children, has been documented a number of times (e.g., McMahon, Forehand & Griest, 1981; O'Leary, Malone & Tyree, 1994; Pan, Neidig & O'Leary, 1994). The developmental consequences of frequently witnessing aggressive acts toward those less powerful (or perceived as less powerful) may be dramatic. At worst it has been linked with an increased likelihood that one will subsequently abuse ones own children (Heron, Javier, & Cicone, 1992).

PARENTAL VIEWS ON THE DISPLAY OF ANGER IN FRONT OF CHILDREN

This thesis has documented the significant role of parental practices on a child's understanding and subsequent formulation of emotional scripts. Therefore the messages that parents give their children regarding the appropriateness of emotional expression has possible long ranging effects and is worthy of consideration. Parents demonstrate an awareness of the importance that their children learnt to express anger through discourse (*"to verbalise their anger", Subject 26, mother)*, rather than through physical aggression, and recognise the need for a child to become familiar with the underlying rules which regulate emotional expression, for instance *"I want him* [four year old son] *to learn that anger is OK and to talk about it, and also to learn that others get angry with him but that it is still OK - therefore it's controlled anger" (subject 37, mother).*

That the developmental age of the child may be an important determinant of the child's ability to recognise emotions, and generate explanations for them is recognised by parents; *"when our children were young, we very rarely expressed any anger between ourselves* [the wife and husband] *while they were present. As they grew to teenagers, we however set more of an example as they were better able to tolerate, understand, and learn from this" (Subject 87, father).* Parent refine their emotional expressions around their children and are aware of the apparent influences of emotional expression on their children; *"I'll happily yell blue murder at my partner if I'm angry and am trying to express it but try to control it around or with the children" (Subject 35, mother),* though the intent did not always reach actuality *"we try to keep it to ourselves - but it doesn't always work out that way!" (Subject 7, father).* Many parents stress the importance of modelling appropriate forms of anger resolution in front of their children; *"We always discuss openly any conflicts and never go to sleep on anger or unresolved conflicts. We all have the freedom to say how we feel and why and have learnt to criticise the <u>behaviour</u> not the person" (Subject14, mother, subject's own underline).*

Whilst some parents readily acknowledge that they had been provoked to a point where they wanted to hit, or lash out at their children (69.4 percent reported that they had had an

angry urge), many state (quite emphatically too) that they had never had an angry urge. Whilst the reliability of this result is questionable "*any one who says they haven't is lying" (Subject 63, mother,* it may be that some parents are not comfortable accepting that they do have such feelings, it does become apparent that it is in those situations where as parents ones resources are most stressed that control is most frequently lost, "*in a state of frustration that occurs occasionally when all family members are tired etc." (Subject 36, male father).* Those parents who admit having angry urges are quite forthcoming in acknowledging that they have acted on their feelings, often in an inappropriate manner, *". . . physically and very aggressively moving him to his room. I felt terrible. He didn't seem to care!" (Subject 72, mother).*

That parents sometimes act out of feelings of anger and frustration in ways considered inappropriate may be a source of guilt; *"whilst I have never actually harmed them, they have been very frightened at times, for which I have been and are both ashamed and properly apologetic. With the amazing resiliency of children everywhere, I have found that they have been only to pleased to forgive me and put the incident(s) behind them" (Subject 87, father).* This suggests that not only do parents report feeling a certain amount of guilt about their inability to control anger around their children, but serves as a further acknowledgment, from both children and parents, that following anger a return to normal family functioning is desired and that the behaviour displayed by a parent in these incidences is not indicative of usual family responding when angry. (It is possible that in dysfunctional families characterised by abusive patterns the urge to harm ones children becomes more frequent and is perceived as less controllable, for instance due to circumstances in social situation, psychological illness or stress, or due to a lack of education on parenting principles. One parent notes that a recent *"and difficult emotional crisis . . . has provided a catalyst which has brought to the surface a great deal of anger, pain and fear* [note the concomitant inclusion of pain and fear with the term anger]*. . . with a consequent intensity of emotional expression everyday" (Subject 87, father).* Thus cumulative situational stresses may be very precipitative in determining whether or not a parent will physically abuse ones children.

How a family functions everyday is more important in terms of life-long functioning, than the functioning of a family in any one particular episode. The familial pattern is the element crucial to understanding family functioning. How family members view each anger episode in relation to most other angry episodes will determine the influence of any one incident on both the individual and the family's functioning.

To the researcher it appears logical, upon reflection of the nature of the significant relationships to purport the claim that the single most powerful variable influencing family anger is the interplay between an individual's position within a family and the positions of power that family members occupy around him, or her. Whilst for the purposes of simplicity (and analysis) these have been broken down into categories (age, gender, family structure, ethnicity, et cetera) these all share the common variable of a socially and politically imposed value. Certain positions within these categories are perceived as superior, active and dynamic whereas others have historically been allotted positions of subordinancy and passivity; for example in our society men are predominantly dominant and women subordinate (wherein male dominance is viewed by the feminists as a consequence of socioeconomic factors). This view that people in a subordinate role will curb their anger expressions to individuals in a superior role is not new; for example Aristotle first noted that the experience of anger is dependent upon ones position (cited in Solomon, 1976). Further much contemporary thought (both within and outside psychology) has concerned itself with the highly politically based interplay between those in power and those without. Thus whilst each variable will be discussed separately, it is important to be aware of the overlapping and binding theme. According to the view of social constructivism the analysis of the variables as separate entities, apart from saying something distinctly objective, serves to indicate how different past and contemporary worlds of experience may determine and shape individual experience (Torestad, 1990).

9.2 INDIVIDUAL VARIABLES INFLUENCING FAMILY FUNCTIONING WHEN ANGRY

AGE

The finding that young people (those between 12 and 20 years inclusive) do not differ significantly from their adult counterparts in their frequency of angry episodes can be interpreted as providing support for the hypothesis that by a very early age people become socialised to the display rules which surround the expression of, and indeed the experience of anger in the home.

Independent of any potential effects of family factors, subject age does not influence the personal experience of anger within a family situation. Adults and young people have the same level of control over their mental thoughts and behaviour when angry and are as likely as each other to become angry within a family situation and report that other family members have been angry during the previous week. However, adults view of their family environment when angry is from a more positive light; through 'rose-coloured glasses'. The way a subject expresses their anger within a family situation, and the way they view the expression of anger in other family members is dependent upon age. Adults, compared to young people, show a significant bias towards reporting that their family shows less anger than other families, that anger expression is beneficial to family functioning and should be encouraged to allow for resolution and growth. Adults believe that family anger, when it arises, is dealt with quickly and effectively and are unlikely to look at any contingencies involved prior to the their anger.

Conversely, young people are more likely to hide their anger or express it dependent on the situation. This finding has been replicated elsewhere. As children age they are more likely to suppress their anger, instead displaying neutral affect (Cummings, 1987). Due to the power relationship inherent within the family structure, children (regardless of their chronological age) are in a position of subordinacy. The parent therefore is likely to be perceived as occupying a position of immediate power. Feelings of respect or intimidation

may stem from either direct experience (eg. being grounded, escalating family arguments, punishment for expressing angry feelings) or indirect means (eg. passive forms of punishment for the expression of anger in the past, for instance, withdrawal of affection from the child following the expression of anger or negative reinforcement when anger has been felt but obviously withheld). Research indicates that as a child ages he or she is more likely to suppress their feelings of anger (Cummings et al., 1984; Cummings, 1987; Goodenough & Tyler, 1959). All combine into giving the child a "message" about how anger may be expressed, or even if it can be justifiably expressed within his/her particular family in the particular context.

To support this view the reasons subjects gave relating to the consequences of expressing their anger revealed that young people are concerned about the personal cost of expressing anger. Young people tend to view anger more negatively than children and take greater responsibility for its expression (Cummings et al., 1991) and are more likely to become involved in an angry interchange (Cummings et al., 1987; Cummings et al., 1991). Thus the belief that anger displays are disruptive and that anger may in some reflect dysfunctional behaviour within themselves combined with a perception of greater potential to suffer personal hurt due to an increased probability of becoming involved in the anger, may cause young people to weigh-up the consequences before they express anger. Indeed, if a young person displays anger around his or her family they generally do so only if they believe there will be a positive outcome. Negative outcomes as a consequence of expressing anger increase incremental with age (Fuchs & Thelen, 1988) and children learn from an early age that the expression of a negative emotion is likely to be met with disapproval or rejection (Saarni, 1979). This combined with young peoples increased cognitive capabilities to construct hypothetical outcomes of conflict (Piaget, 1981) which may well be in the negative may all combine to give the young person the message that anger expression should be suppressed, thus providing support for the notion that the socialisation of negative emotions is particularly salient (Reichenbach & Masters, 1983).

Conversely, due to their position of immediate power, parents may not perceive that there is a high probability of incurring any personal cost following the expression of anger. As an 'all-powerful parent' they are likely to 'win' any angry confrontation therefore leading to less caution about expressing anger. Another explanation is that parents may try to consciously model appropriate forms of anger expression and resolution (behaviours which have been reinforced through social praise in their past) whereas young people have yet to fully take on the display rules regarding anger expression and/or that the expression of anger in young people is considered less appropriate than it is for adults (Laiken & Schneider, 1980). As a result young people receive negative responses from family members for their angry displays (thus serving to further socialise the youngster) (Fuchs & Thelen, 1988). Further, the finding that younger people are most likely to be physically aggressive when angry, suggesting that their ability to 'control' angry feelings is immature in comparison to their parents and provides support for this proposition. Indeed the display of aggression is age-dependent, young people are more physically aggressive than adults, with young males being especially so (Robins & Rutter, 1990; Wallerstein & Kelly).

Another age-related finding is that young people perceive the level of anger in their family home as being in excess of that displayed in other homes. The frequency of conflictual issues between parents and adolescents has not been consistently demonstrated to be related to adolescent adjustment variables, for instance whilst Tesser & Forehand (1991) found that adolescent adjustment is <u>not</u> related to the frequency of angry interactions both Grotevant & Cooper (1985) and Hauser (1984) found that increased levels of family anger are correlated with adjustment. Developmental work suggests that adolescents, due to development in cognitive capabilities, for instance the development of formal operations (Piaget, 1972), may be concerned with and highly sensitive to the perceived thoughts of others. As such they may frequently play out mental private fantasies imaging others thoughts about them, consequently shaping their behaviour dependent upon this imaginary and judgemental audience (Elkind & Bowen, 1979). It may be that within a family, where anger is likely to be experienced more frequently than in a public setting, teenagers are more

susceptible and sensitive to the perceived anger, and potential for family anger. They may actually perceive conflict within interchanges where it does not exist (or was not expressed intentionally), and/or that parents are not as aware of the provocative things they may say and do. This belief would be reinforced in turn by the young person's suppressing of their anger. in part reinforced by the youngsters demonstrated tendency not to express their anger. This tendency for a developmental bias is supported by work which illustrates that adolescents report more everyday conflict with their parents than their parent do with them (Montemayor, 1983).

GENDER

From the results it initially appears that gender does not play a major role in determining the experience of anger, either at a personal or a familial level. Male and female subjects do not differ in their reported frequency of angry feelings in a family situation, nor in the number of reported family anger episodes. There are no significant difference between male and female control of physical aggression when angry, or control over mental images when angry.

Thus whilst the popular conception may be that males are physically more aggressive than females (Rohner, 1970), this research supports other psychological evidence which suggests that there are no differences between males and females with regard to the frequency of aggression (e.g., Frodi, et al., 1977 conducted a comprehensive review of 72 studies with the same result). These researchers concluded that "it seems likely that a significant proportion of variation in aggression between. . .the sexes can be accounted for by guilt or anxiety avoidance or arousal . . .Sex differences seldom appear when aggression is allowable behaviour for women. This suggests that women's proneness to aggression anxiety or guilt, may, in fact, be inhibiting aggressive tendencies in many situations were sex differences are found" (p.645).

Further, this finding can be generalised to the whole experience of anger itself. The argument that there are quantitative differences between the way males and females

experience anger does appear 'cliche'. After conducting a number of empirical studies Averill (1982) concluded that there are no major differences in the way men and women experience anger. Men become angry as frequently, as intensely, and for the same reasons as women. Overall these studies investigated individuals ranging in age from 3-60 years, as such the conclusions appear comprehensive. Any group differences in the experience of anger appear to be largely non-existent. Thus, if there are any individual differences in the way anger is manifested, it appears to be largely independent of gender (Thomas 1992; Averill, 1982; 1983).

However, one significant and telling result was found; there was a significant trend for males to report complete control of their behaviour when angry, whereas females tend to report only moderate levels, or little control, over their actions and expressions when angry. Whilst this does contradict earlier findings that boys are more likely to suppress anger than girls (Speilberger et al., 1985) this finding that boys repress emotional and relational issues to a larger extent than girls has been replicated in many studies, including those by Thomas (1989, 1990, 1992) and Haynes et al., (1978).

A recent resurgence of feminism has seen attention focused on how women experience anger. A number of feminists have argued that women, who live in a predominantly patriarchal society, have been forced to suppress their anger and furthermore that the legitimacy of their anger has been denied by both society and their male counterparts, resulting in both physical and psychological deterioration. Thus the argument has been levelled that male dominant society does not allow women to express their anger openly or freely and that whilst women are viewed as essentially emotive creatures the one 'exception' to this is anger, which is considered a "typically male response" (Shields, 1987, p.235). This tendency to view women as highly emotive is an example of a gender stereotype. Gender stereotypes are "structured set[s] of beliefs about the personal attributes of women and men" (Smith, Ulch, Cameron, & Cumberland, 1989, p.222) and influence the way in which women and men are viewed by others in daily life. Thus the expression of anger by women may

constitute a violation of gender stereotypic prescriptions and angry women may be viewed more negatively than angry men. It is not considered appropriate, or even valid for a women to experience anger. This message is evident in children of both genders from preschool age. Preschoolers associate positive emotions with females and negative emotions (including anger) with male emotional displays (Birnbaum, et al., 1980).

Women's anger "is discouraged [and] suppressed not through fear or misinterpretation, but through invalidation" (Crawford, et al., 1990, p.342).

> *"In contrast [to men] women have been denied the forthright expression of even healthy and realistic anger . . . All our definitions of femininity have perpetuated the myth that the truly feminine woman is devoid of anger and aggressiveness, especially towards men and children" (Lerner, 1985, p.5).*

This stereotype is reflected within the results; whilst men tend to see themselves in control when angry "*the angrier I am the quieter I'll be" (Subject 27, father)* and *"I try to explain to her why I'm angry" (Subject 12, father)* women express concern about the potential ramifications of anger expression, *"when I'm angry I just don't know what to do . . . so I usually end up crying or screaming at them all . . . no doubt they all think I'm crazy" (Subject 63, mother).*

It would appear that regardless of the actual frequency or form anger takes for males or females, the expression of anger is still perceived as 'unladylike'; the "little-girls-are-made-of-sugar-and-spice" syndrome. This concept is known as the feminine ideal (Thomas, 1992); epitomised by the selfless, ever-nurturing, perfect mother who is held up in binary opposition to the complaining, nagging and angry women who fills the negative stereotype of the bad mother. Research supports the argument that feminine traits are correlated with social desirability (Brody, 1986) and that gender-role stereotypes are pervasive and widely generalisable from early childhood (Birnbaum et al., 1980).

In our society men are predominantly dominant and women subordinate. Being in a subordinate position generally evokes feelings of anger within the dominant group who wishing to maintain the status quo and ensure that no significant changes are made, actively seek is not expressed (Thomas, 1992). Stearns & Stearns (1986) researched the social attitude towards anger in American history over the last two hundred years, and argue that there is more social pressure on women than on men to control and manage both the experience and the display of anger. The diminution of anger and enhancement of other emotions subserve the social and economic roles occupied by women. As social agents women gain their objectives through gaining the approval of, or invoking independency on others.

Even though this process may be occurring unconsciously it does appear to be at work and particularly salient, within the familial environment. Women are taught that it is socially unacceptable to display anger they are also taught that it is acceptable to be dependent, passive and in need of protection. Thus a women fearful that if she shows anger she will be alienated from loved ones is likely to turn her feelings of anger (eg. if someone has behaved in a way so as to let expectations down) into those of hurt and disappointment (Lerner, 1985). Fear of alienating those men with whom they have intimate relationships means that women in an attempt to preserve harmony often chose to redirect or suppress their anger (Egerton, 1988). Supporting evidence for these ideas comes from the many studies of Thomas (e.g., 1989; 1990; 1992) who postulated that women fear anger for its potential to cause dramatic disruptions of their intimate male relationships. Thomas claims that whilst anger towards men is the most common type of female anger it is most frequently redirected towards the self, other females or those with less power (e.g., children) and vented in an inimical or impotent fashion.

The social representations of each gender (how each gender explains their social emotional behaviour when angry) may differ between men and women. Women's anger appears to be highly controlled by the external environment (Campbell & Muncer, 1987). In an environment such as the family which is (without wishing to perpetuate a stereotype)

frequently the main focus and concern of women, the influence of the home and a women's perception of her place within the family, will have a direct and significant influence on the formation of her attributions about both herself and others thereby directly influencing the development of her social representations. Thus a women generates and perpetuates the scripts for a specific (if not at times self-defeating) form of behaviour. One which is potentially mirrored and imitated by subsequent generations (Bandura, 1977). This social representation is also reinforced by differential treatment by parents. For example, parents are more accepting of anger in sons than daughters (Birnbaum & Croll, 1984) further boys tend to be stimulated to aggressive action (e.g., played with roughly by their fathers) (El-Sheikh, Cummings & Goetsch, 1989). And lastly, on television anger is significantly more commonly displayed by male characters than by female characters (Birnbaum & Croll, 1984).

If emotions are learned within a cultural context, and cultures do have gender-specific rules regarding the expression of anger, how a parent responds to an angry child and the message he or she receives regarding angry emotional behaviour are crucial in furthering our understanding of emotional processes. The focus of research should be on the messages we are giving our children. Research suggests that messages regrading emotional behaviour are being socialised from a very early age and that children quickly adapt and behave according to them. Daughters are more likely to intervene in family anger (Vuchinich et al., 1988) and yet greater negative responses when they witness anger in family members (Block, et al., 1986; Cummings et al., 1991; Cummings et al., 1985).

However, to look at the other side of this argument there are some male liberationists who claim that it is males rather than females who have problems identifying and dealing with angry feelings (Thomas, 1992). That whilst women are able to express angry feelings towards men in therapy sessions male are often unable to (Tavris, 1982). Likewise men are taught from an early age that the expression of anger, and of aggression (especially towards women) is unacceptable. Other evidence suggests that boys rather than girls deny their emotions are more likely to consciously suppress their anger (Speilberger et al. 1985; Tavris,

1982). Males learn early on that they will psychologically loose any confrontation with a female, because win or loose they will be labelled as a "bully" (Tavris, 1982).

In summary the issue of power is very important with regard to our experiences of anger. Men's and women's cultures do not exist side-by-side, rather one exists largely unseen and unspoken within, between and subordinate to the other (Crawford, et al., 1990). A woman's anger may well by largely unintelligible to a man and vice versa. If these results are to be validated one needs to address the issue of the nature of feminism. For many decades the cry has been that "the times they are a-changing", however this study does not appear to uphold this. It may well be that there is a major difference between impression and reality. Perhaps the persistent belief that women do not express anger well (in spite of contrary evidence) occurs because many women are caught in a time-lag between traditional ideas and modern behaviour. Thus whereas more and more women are behaving like men when angry (i.e., expressing their anger in similar ways) 'experts' continue to assume that they are not. Furthermore, this study has looked specifically at the manifestation of anger within the family. It may be that the family is in many ways the final bastion of male dominance and that changes, slow as they may be, are hampered even more by the issues inherent within the family structure (e.g., women still are the primary caregivers a role which requires she develop nurturing emotions and puts herself in a position which requires economic dependence on her spouse).

For these stereotypes to change radically perhaps a reformulation of the concept of the family itself will be necessary. Little research has actually investigated how the genders conceptualise anger, or, how individuals may use anger within the framework of their partnerships and marriages. Whilst family conflict and modes of conflict resolution have been studied this has not been from the point of view of anger as a functional everyday occurrence.

ETHNICITY

The common European cultural stereotype of anger expression is that anger represents a "loss of control" by the individual, and is often used as justification for violence and aggression (Campbell & Muncer, 1987). Further, the expression of anger is frequently considered justifiable if it is used as a cultural imperative (Averill, 1980a; 1982). These general views have raised much contemporary contention. Research suggests that it is quite possible that cross-cultural variations may differently influence the affective development and consequently personality profiles of groups by culture (Ben-Zuhr & Breznitz, 1988; Ekman, 1972).

In New Zealand this has been highlighted in the portrayal of Maori as a violent and aggressive race, for instance, in the recent movie "Once Were Warriors". Previous statistics have suggested that Maori are more likely to commit violent offences (Department of Statistics, 1991), Maori men are five times as likely to be convicted of rape, and are about four times as likely to be convicted of murder (Newbold, 1995). This finding is not confined to society at large, Maori families are more likely to experience physically aggression within the home when disciplining their children (Kidd, 1992), and are fourteen times as likely to be imprisoned for child abuse and six times as likely to be imprisoned for assaulting a female (Newbold, 1995).

Against this backdrop the results for subject ethnicity are somewhat unexpected. Whilst European, or Pakeha subjects are evenly distributed between the frequency of angry feeling categories (Pakehas are as likely to report frequent feelings of anger at family members as they were to report infrequent feelings of anger), Maori subjects on the other hand report significantly fewer instances of personal angry feelings in a family situation and show a definite trend towards reporting fewer family anger episodes (no Maori subject reported frequent instances of angry feelings in a family situation). Further Maori are no more likely than Pakeha subjects to report that physical aggression accompanies their feelings of anger in a family situation and show no significant difference in the way that their family addresses and resolves anger.

These findings are not to be dismissed but instead should be looked at from a different perspective. In light of them it may be that rather than reflecting actual rates of anger and physical aggression that the above statistics instead reflect biases within the police's arresting tactics and focus. So too is it highly possible that these figures also reflect biases within the Judicial System and its sentencing practices. These, combined with current and past prejudicial attitudes (the "Maori-discipline-their-kids-with-their-fists" attitude), generate a forceful stereotype upon which the majority are judged given the behaviour of a few. The Maori, rather than having a characteristically angry and /or aggressive way of behaving, may be inequitably represented within crime and domestic violence figures due to a number of social factors including the combined mixing pot of lower, or culturally inappropriate education levels, a lack of problem-solving skills specific for their culture that compliment New Zealand urban living, an increased poverty, lack of adequate housing, health care and food et cetera, place general stress on Maori family units which consequently may lead to the higher rates of domestic violence/anger and violent offending that are evident. High levels of aggression and, or anger may be attributable to social factors rather than race. The apparent, and highlighted racial variables may only be brushing the surface. Previous criticisms that current research therefore tends to be patronising and dismissive of Maori culture (Bishop & Glyn, 1992) may be well founded.

Possible reasons for the finding must still be investigated. Findings that Maori are not as good at labelling posed facial expressions as Pakeha (Mehta et al., 1992) may mean that Maori are generally less culturally primed to those covert signals which are taken, by Europeans, to indicate that one is feeling angry. Considering European history, the allegation that Pakeha thinking is embedded in conflict and aggression would also appear well founded. It is entirely possible that Maori view both anger and even their family differently to Pakeha. The media image of Maori as a violent and angry race stems more from their active and at times aggressive contact with different cultural groups, for instance the Europeans against whom the Maori feel they have legitimate grievances, rather than reflective of their cultural

familial practices. Indeed the finding that the Maori had less frequent feelings of anger in a family situation may reflect the Maori focus on home life and whanau. The construct of the family is one that is especially important for Maori, as such they may place more of an emphasise on happy family relations than Pakeha. If roles within the family are more defined and accepted in Maori homes than within Pakeha families then there may also be less potential for family conflict.

FREQUENCY OF PERSONAL ANGRY FEELINGS

Subjects frequently experience anger within a family situation. Personal feelings of anger within a family situation occur approximately twice per week. However whilst previous research indicates a relationship between cognitions, irrational thoughts and the frequency of anger (Mizes, et al., 1990) was not upheld within this study. The frequency of angry feelings is unrelated to the perceived degree of control one has over cognitions, thoughts and mental images when angry. The frequency of reported control over behaviour and actions when angry was also found not to have a significant relationship with the subject's reported frequency of angry feelings in family situations.

This finding that a subject's frequency of anger was not significantly correlated to personally monitored behaviours, neither cognitions nor behaviour were related to the frequency of angry feelings. Instead, when considered with the rest of the results, it appears that the familial experience of anger played a larger role in determining the individual's reported experience of anger than did the subject's perceived ability to regulate their emotions. Further it suggests that individual's see themselves as functioning parts of a unit. They frequently become involved in family anger episodes and feel they are able to shape the outcome. It also suggests that whilst a large body of research has focused on differentiating between a temporary state of anger and an angry trait (e.g., Speilberger et al., [1983]) that even though an individual may have a stable propensity towards the display of anger, that within his or her family context, this is more likely to be influenced by familial expectancies than personal.

Subjects who report high levels of personal angry feelings within the family, and who report they had little control over their overt expression when angry are also likely to report that they frequently express their anger in conjunction with physical aggression. There is a large degree of variability in the types of actions that this considered to be physically aggressive; from breaking or hitting inanimate objects (e.g., *"I have broken a window once and walk around the garden kicking things when really angry; Subject 89, mother)* to the acknowledgment of very aggressive acts *"I go out and shot the crap out of the chamois" (Subject 7, son).*

The wording of the question is worth consideration here; subjects were not asked if they 'lashed out' or 'expressed their anger physically' but if they were physically aggressive. The word aggression has decidedly widely-held and accepted negative connotations. Despite this over 40% of all subjects reported that they are physically aggressive when angry. Over three quarter of these subjects direct their aggression towards children within their family compared with less than a quarter of people who are physically aggressive when angry direct this toward an adult family member. It appears then, that power plays in important role in determining whether or not a family member will be the target of aggression. More so, that the apparent enforced passivity which accompanies the role of child leaves a child open to the threat of physical aggression.

The social constructivist way of thinking that the personal experience is determined by the social context of the individual, in this instance the family, appears to be supported herein. By occupying a subordinate role children are more open to threat of physical aggression, more likely to be the target of physical aggression and have reduced avenues to pursue when they are the victim of physical aggression.

9.3 FAMILY VARIABLES INFLUENCING FAMILY FUNCTIONING WHEN ANGRY

FAMILY STRUCTURE

Whilst previous research has suggested that non-nuclear structured families are likely to experience more unresolved anger than two-parent intact families (Zastowny & Lewis, 1990), this finding was not upheld here. Subjects from all three family types did not report any significant differences in how their families resolved expressed anger, rather the differences which emerged were indicative of differences between the rules regarding the display of emotion in that families of non-nuclear structure were both more likely not to express anger.

Variables relating to family structure were influential in determining the experience of anger. Whilst two-parent intact families are as likely to become angry over one issue as they are any other, the results indicated significant differences exist between the experience of anger for single-parent and step- parent families. Whilst individuals, from various family structures, do not report any increase or decrease in the number of times they become provoked to anger within a family situation the frequency of communal anger episodes did show dramatic differences. Single-parent and step-parent families demonstrate a significant reduction in the number of family anger episodes. Further they differ in the issues which cause family anger.

The most frequent cause of anger in step-families is interpersonal conflict, the opinions and attitudes of other family members, parent-child conflict, and the actions and behaviours of family members. The presence of a non-family member appears to influence the experience of anger for individual family members. Both the children, and adults, within a step-family maybe aware that the boundaries of acceptance for emotional behaviour have changed; that the rules which had governed family functioning in the past may not be upheld, or are not necessarily easily enforced by a step-parent; for example one subject states that *"you tend to take things further - sometimes a step too far - most likely to happen when parents* [i.e. natural

parents] *aren't around - you normally know how far to push parents before you cross the boundary" (Subject 21, step-daughter).* This comment highlights the awareness that boundaries have shifted; that the rules which governed family processes in the past, such that children knew through past experiences when they had broken family display rules regarding the expression of emotion, are no longer adequately able to predict future familial responding.

The presence of the new person within the family, a person occupying a powerful role (that of provider and authority-figure) dramatically appears to alter the readiness of members to express their anger. In both two-parent families and step-families, the presence of a father figure, may actually quantitatively increase the potential number of things that cause family anger. It may be that fathers are especially likely to provoke anger and conflict, or at least have the potential to alter the individual's behaviour, and the behaviour of other family members. Whilst in step-parent families the behaviour, or presence of a father figure may be viewed as provocative and stimulating angry feelings these are inhibited. In two-parent intact families, where the expression of anger may be less threatening to the family structure, and are therefore more readily accepted, anger expression may occur more frequently.

It is likely that not all the step-families which completed questionnaires were new family structures, and that some subjects had been a member of a step-parent family for a long time, that time does not necessarily alter this perception. A comparison can be made between the finding that subjects were more likely to hide their anger from non-family members (68% of all subjects report they attempt to hide anger from members of the public and their friends) and the tendency for step-family members to hide their anger in family situations. It may be that regardless of the duration of a step-family's life together that a tendency to view the step-parent as 'not quite family' (therefore someone around whom anger should be hidden) still persists after time.

Step-families appear to be particularly sensitive to those everyday actions which have the potential to create anger in all families. It may be that the patterns and expectations of

emotional behaviour which are formed over time have been disrupted by the insertion of a new parent, those patterns (regardless of how dysfunctional they may appear to the rest of us) are no longer considered appropriate or serve a functional purpose.

The clue may lie the in high level of remarriages involving a divorced parent who already has children (Department of Statistics, 1991). As these children are likely to have witnessed parental conflict in the past there may be a conscious effort on their behalf to refrain from expressing anger again, a conscious desire not to return to the anger riddled days of the past. If the divorce was 'messy' a lingering bitterness may mean that the natural parent too is determined not to experience the same frequency, or intensity of anger. Consequently, children may refrain from expressing their anger toward a step-parent (most usually a male), perhaps stemming from a desire not to tip the balance, for instance research has indicated that children are anxious about expressing anger within a step-family as it is likely to be perceived as threatening to the new family structure (Rosenberg & Hajal, 1985). Finally, many children may decide not to express their anger out of loyalty toward their natural parent (Weltner, 1982).

The reduction of family anger episodes for step parents is not to say that these family units are necessarily functioning at a better level than other families. Studies suggest that the emotional competence of both children and adults following a divorce is reduced (e.g., Hetherington, et al., 1979; Wallerstein & Kelley, 1980), boys of divorced parents are more aggressive than their counterparts from two-parent intact families (Santrock et al., 1982). Thus the assertion is made that rather than reflecting a functional family, the reduced levels of anger in step-families may be demonstrative of the family's inability to find a functional and family-appropriate model for anger expression and resolution. This finding is apparently in direct conflict to more recent research which suggests that families who have experienced divorce do experience long-term positive outcomes (Zastowny & Lewis, 1990). One possible explanation for the Zastowny and Lewis finding is that this study investigated an individual's ability to adapt to divorce rather than familial variables. Whilst individuals may be able to

tackle and come to terms with their own feelings regarding a divorce, perhaps family functioning of step-families never comes to mirror that of other family structures.

Whilst the above explanation has tried to look at variables relevant to both the divorce and the formulation of a new family following a remarriage, the results for single parent families do not necessarily support the assertions that it is the divorce per se which has caused family problems. Given this it would appear more robust instead to assume that the processes involved in the reformulation of a new family identity are those which lead to the suppression of angry feelings and the increased susceptibility to become angered over other family members. In this study single-parent families, as well as reporting a significant reduction in the frequency of anger episodes, show a change in the issues which cause family anger.

Single parent families are disproportionately angered about money and are unlikely to cite differences of opinion, or parent-child conflicts as common causes of family anger. Whilst single parent families are still angered by these things they appear better able to cope with interpersonal problems, which are unlikely to cause family anger. Perhaps because parents are less likely to become angry over their children's actions, divorced single mothers are more permissive and less controlling than mothers in two parent intact families, (Santrock, et al., 1982), or, because these family structures make a conscious effort not to experience conflict, *"Because I am a single parent the three of us find it easy to follow our way of doing things. An outsider may upset the balance. The children's views/opinions are always listened to. We are very comfortable with each other" (Subject14, divorced mother).* The earlier assertion that the presence of a father figure is a main cause of family anger (in that a father represents a very real position of authority over all other family members) may also be a contributing factor.

Single-parent families appear better able to cope with anger than step-families and, indeed, even two-parent intact families. Thus the results which indicate that single-parent families show a marked reduction in being angered over interpersonal issues and are most

likely to experience family anger over 'concrete' issues may reflect the stresses placed on this particular family structure within our culture which is fairly unsupportive of single-parent families, for example, the increased financial strain placed by-in-large on women caring for their children.

Even though single mothers are the greatest users of mental health and social services (McLanahan et al., 1981) it would appear from this study that this is not necessarily due to any increase in family conflict. Rather it may reflect the social inequalities which single mothers face, for example heightened economic strain, having one's needs ignored by politicians, and inadequate social support for women having to parent alone. Thus, it is not single parents per se who are more likely to experience problems with anger but parents who are forced to live in a situation characterised by high levels of stress and low levels of support. Research indicates that individuals who have low levels of social support also have an increased number of anger symptoms than do individuals who have a fair to good level of social support (Thomas & Donnellon, 1990). Thus the greatest issue facing single families with regard to their experience of anger may be external.

FREQUENCY OF FAMILY ANGER

As suggested previously the frequency of family anger was positively correlated with a number of variables which influenced individual functioning when angry.

To recap, the frequency of family anger is positively correlated with (1) family age (younger families experience more frequent anger episodes), (2) personal levels of control over overt expressions (individuals from family's which experience frequent anger are less likely to feel in control of their behaviour when angry whilst level of control over behaviour when angry is <u>not</u> significantly related to personally frequency of angry feelings), (3) frequency of physical aggression when angry (families who experience frequent family anger episodes are more likely to experience physical aggression in family members when angry), (4) the

)erceived level of family anger (whilst subjects report high levels of family anger perceive that heir families show the same amount of anger as other families, subjects who report nfrequent family instances report that their families show less anger than other families), and, (5) the frequency of family anger (families reporting frequent instances of family anger are more likely to become angered over everyday matters). However, the frequency of family anger was not significantly related to either family beliefs regarding the expression of anger or the duration and resolution mode of anger for a family.

These last two findings are somewhat surprising; one would assume due to the hypothesised close link between the personal experience and the familial experience and that the individual's belief regarding the expression of anger is intricately linked to his or her family's belief, that a family's 'rules' regarding the display and resolution of anger would have a significant effect on the family's actual level of anger. However this is not the case. Those families which believe that anger should not be expressed, compared to those families which hold the general belief that all angry feelings should be shared, or disclosed dependent upon the situation, actually demonstrate no quantitative differences in their levels of family anger, or methods of resolution, nor length of duration of anger episodes.

This may appear incongruous until one considers the following; of those factors which the frequency of family anger was related significantly all (bar the variable of family age) related to the subject's perception of his or her family's experiences of anger. As such it is acknowledged that they are open to biases by the subject in reporting. Thus it is arguable that individuals hold beliefs regarding the experience of family anger which are quite different to the actual experience. The reality of the emotional experience may be quite different to the view of either the individual or the family. It is probable that each family has both an actual experience of anger (i.e., the number of times one becomes angry, who one deals with anger in a family situation, et cetera), and a perceived experience of family anger (i.e., the same, or similar events are interpreted and valued differently between different families). It is the perceived experience of anger that family members react to, remember and reconstruct.

How this is reported and explained by the family's 'consciousness' determines the influence of the episode.

Thus how a subject interprets family anger may be based upon the family's widely held beliefs regarding anger expression rather than by the actual experience of anger. Obviously one major problem of this type of assertion is the lack of objective and reliable data to support such a supposition. Independent recording of family members' behaviour when angry is practically impossible it is highly unlikely that families would function naturally in the middle of an argument with an 'independent observer' making notes on a clipboard! The researcher asserts that each family, independent of the actual experience of anger, has an expected mode, length and frequency of family anger to which independent family members will attribute characteristics of other past family anger episodes independent of them actually occurring. That the sequence and contingencies involved within family functioning are more important than the actual frequencies of behaviours has been documented previously (e.g., Gottman & Levenson 1986).

The only variable that is objectively testable was family age. Family age is positively correlated to frequency of family anger. Younger families (with children younger than high school age) experience more frequent instances of anger than do older families. This may be due to changes over development in the experience of anger; young children experience more anger than older children (Cummings et al., 1984; Cummings, 1987; Goodenough & Tyler, 1959). Over time adolescents are socialised not to express anger (Laiken & Schneider, 1980). It may also reflect characteristics of a younger family which may precipitate more instances of family anger.

Young children are not as familiar with the rules regulating the appropriateness, or lack thereof, of anger expression. This lag in emotional socialisation has been documented by both Weiner and Handel (1985) and Fuchs and Thelen (1988). They documented that as a child ages their awareness and knowledge of display rules becomes more sophisticated.

Consequently the assertion that individual child family members are as well equipped to deal with 'angry' feelings as older family members would appear inaccurate.

Interestingly, adolescence is the time one would probably assume a family to be the most vulnerable to anger and yet families with older children perceive that they experience less anger than younger families. This supports the notion that over time a family develops (through past family interactions and methods of resolution that have successfully returned the family's functioning to 'normal') a set of rules regarding the display of anger. Whether these are constructive or not they serve to maintain functionality for the family. Through experience these are modified and individual family members become more familiar with them, accepting or them as their own and has the expectations that these requirements will be filled whenever his or her family experiences anger. Part of this process is that the individual will fulfil the expectations other family members' have of him, or her. For adolescents this process involves the socialisation of the message that anger does not look good (Laiken & Schneider, 1980) and that angry feelings should be suppressed (Fuchs & Thelen, 1988). The difference in the frequency of family anger between young families and older families may reflect the natural time it takes for a family to find a set of rules which 'work for them'. Until this has been achieved more frequent instances of family anger may be expected. Individual family members adopt these roles and explanations for their own emotional behaviour and come to function over time with lower levels of expressed anger. This process of accumulating or acquiring a set of rules for each family involves not just the children being socialised to the parental view but is a dynamic process whereby the children in turn socialises the parent/s.

The notion that the family's perception of emotions and specifically anger is the crucial aspect to understanding individual and family functioning when angry is upheld by findings herein. It is postulated that the accepted mode of family anger (i.e. frequent and passionate, versus, infrequent and calm) dictates what a family will become angry over. Families which expect frequent instances of family anger are therefore postulated to be less effected by anger outbursts than are families which expect to experience infrequent instances of family anger

(remember that the researcher is concerned with everyday instances of anger expression in functional families).

Families which experience frequent anger episodes become angry over more trivial, 'everyday' things, (the behaviour of another family member, what someone said et cetera) whereas those families which experience less frequent instances of family anger become angry over more concrete issues (i.e., alcohol, money, marital issues). Those families who over past patterns of family functioning come to expect infrequent instances of family anger may not actually experience fewer provoking anger episodes, rather, the things which it is considered appropriate to express anger over may be widely diminished in comparison to families reporting frequent instances of anger. Observing how one's own family acts when angry is an inherent part of family functioning. Through observation, imitation and modelling a child (and parents) learn to recognise patterns of behaviour and expected outcomes. Emotional scripts are generated for their own and family members' behaviour. Individual's also learn to generate a definition based on familial experiences as to what constitutes anger. Thus a family member in a household which frequently experiences anger will be provoked to anger by different events and will have differing expectations of outcome and resolution than will an individual from a family which infrequently experiences anger.

These pervasive emotional scripts appear related to the subject's perception of their ability to control overt expressions when angry. Those families which experience frequent instances of anger are more likely to have family members which report that they are not able to control their outward expressions when angry, whereas family members from families which experience infrequent instances of family anger are significantly more likely to report that they are in control of themselves when angry.

A significant positive correlation between a subject's reported frequency of internal angry feelings and the reported frequency expressed, communal, family anger was revealed; to wit subjects reporting frequent instances of angry feelings are significantly correlated with families

experiencing frequent anger episodes. Thus a subject becomes angry as a function of the families experience of anger. Irrespective of gender or age variables it would appear that how frequently an individual experiences anger is closely related to the frequency of family anger; how the defines his or her emotional experience of anger is tied to the family's explanation of the same event.

Frequency of physical aggression is also significantly correlated with a subject's reported degree of control over overt expressions. Those subjects who reported they have less control over behaviour when angry report significantly more instances of physical aggression when angry. The likelihood of physical aggression occurring in an individual's behavioural repertoire when angry is positively correlated to the likelihood of other family members displaying physical aggression. Physical aggression accompanied angry feelings over 60% of the time in family members and 48% of the time for the subjects. These results are dramatically different to Averill (1983) who found that peoples angry responses were largely nonaggressive. When aggression did occur in Averill's sample it occurred symbolically or verbally, direct aggression occurred in only 10% of episodes. One of the major reasons for this may be in the choice of sample population. Whilst Averill was investigating everyday experiences of anger, this study was concerned only with the experience of anger within the home. It would appear that the inhibition to display anger is more prevalent toward non-family members and that the suppression of aggression has not been generalised towards family members. That is, people are more likely to be physically aggressive toward family members than toward the public. Perhaps the perceived costs of expressing anger aggressively toward members of the public vastly outweighs any perceived benefits whilst the perceived cost of being aggressive toward family members in considerably reduced.

Those subjects that came from families where physical aggression occurs in angry family members are significantly more likely to accompany their own feelings of anger with physical aggression. Physical aggression in parents has been correlated to an increased probability of physically aggressive behaviours in offspring (Pan, et al., 1994; Felson, 1982). Evidence

also suggests that there is a cyclic nature to physical abuse occurring within families (e.g., Herron et al., 1992). A self-serving bias may be evident. These data rely on self-report. Within this society however, we have seen that subject's estimate of their physical aggressiveness when angry is lower than their estimates of physical aggression in family members. It may be that subjects who report high levels of physical aggression when angry are more likely to report that their family members have a higher level of physical aggression therefore highlighting the role of the behaviour of other family members in their own behaviour. That individuals are most likely to give a interpersonal account for physical aggression rather than attempting to explain their behaviour through intraindividual or preconscious processes has been acknowledged previously (Felson, 1983). Further we tend to generate accounts for our behaviour by attempting to construct a sympathetic social framework within which aggressive actions will be seen in the most positive light (Campbell & Muncer, 1987). Thus the recognition that physical aggression is not an appropriate mode of anger expression may mean people tend to connect their own behaviour with family members'.

MODE OF EXPRESSION TO FAMILY MEMBERS

One of the main ways people define themselves in relation to family members' is through the roles they fill. Family roles refer to the "rules of conduct ascribed and assumed by individual members holding specific structural positions in the family system" (Katakis, 1988, p.357). Thus a role is the directly observable interaction of the individual in an everyday family situation dependent on certain widely held (but not necessarily verbalised) rules and beliefs about how that individual should respond as a function of their age, gender, position-of-power, expectations about their behaviour and attitudes. A family role is dictated and shaped by the broader, more general social rules and attitudes and any prevailing changes to social beliefs will undoubtedly influence familial roles.

An investigation into which factors influence a subject's reactions when angry at a family member reveal that family members are treated differently when they have provoked anger in the subject as a function of their position within the family. When we become angry in a family setting the explanations we generate are a function of past family interactions when

angry and of how we see ourselves in relation to other family members. One of the main ways we define ourselves in relation to other family members in terms of perceived power and the expected consequences of expressing anger. This may well differ according to gender. Egerton (1988) found that women feel there is a higher normative cost in expressing anger than men (these include perceived relationship costs, lowered self-esteem, and increased levels of distress). The perceived level of social power and the reinforcement conditions of a relationship may be important parameters in determining whether anger will be expressed and how.

An analysis of the results reveals that not only is anger not expressed to some family members but that the mode of expression of angry feelings differs significantly between family position. Averill (1982) asserts that whilst different forms of anger expression may not be demonstrative of a sex-linked trait that they may well be linked to dependency issues and as such anger expression is frequently displayed dependent on gender. Further due to the pressures of social and family values, women are more likely to be dependent on men than vice versa. As such there is a real need for women to develop non-confrontary modes of anger expression that preserve both the self and the family. Some interesting and commonly stereotypically reinforced attitudes to support these assertions have been revealed.

Individual's either express or refrain from expressing their anger toward family members depending on who they are angry at. Angry feelings are directed towards provocative children rather than towards provocative family adults (towards whom angry feelings are suppressed). Children are also more likely to become engaged in verbal conflict and physical aggression, perhaps reflecting the child's reduced knowledge of display rules and their inability to cope with displayed anger in other ways. Constructive coping responses may not be as well developed in children, this coupled with their increased tendency to provoke anger in others through their inability to suppress potentially conflictual statements and behaviours may make them a more frequent target of anger.

When we recall the above result for age, that young people are more likely to suppress anger than adults, an explanation for these results which includes a description of positions of power may be accurate. Subjects are more likely to report that they hide their anger from family members who occupy a position of power above them. One of the most telling quotes of all returned questionnaires belongs to a 14 year old male student who notes that it is "OK" to express your anger "*when you are bigger" (Subject 77).* Other subjects report similar reasons for suppressing their anger; *"I yell at Mum and I try not to get angry at Dad" (Subject 79, daughter), "I tell Mum but NOT dad he doesn't care" (Subject 78, son), and "my brothers and sisters are more understanding [than my parents]" (Subject 81, son).* Not only do cross-generational differences occur but so too do gender differences become apparent, the expression of direct anger to family members who fill roles above one's self is frowned upon and discouraged.

Anger is more frequently hidden toward fathers/or husbands than toward mothers/wives. This is a replication of the finding by Tesser and Forehand (1991). Even though boys and girls in their sample were as likely to be angered by their fathers actions as by the mothers, anger was more likely to be withheld from the father. Therefore the gender of the adult determines whether or not anger will be expressed. One reason for this may be the expected outcome of expressing anger. Anger is most frequently hidden from fathers/husbands. If fathers are expected to be more disparaging or dismissive of the subject's anger; for instance, putting the subject down, then anger will be hidden from him. Conversely, mothers are viewed as being more likely to talk through anger, thus subjects appear to feel they can approach a mother or wife with a reduced perceived threat to the self. This is supported by the finding that subjects are more likely to cry when angered by their mother/wife. That verbal conflict was not evident between the subject and mother/wife when angry reinforces the idea that women tend to utilise constructive forms of copying with anger, for instance problem-solving.

When angered by a father, subjects are very likely to respond with tears. Tears, especially in women has been identified, as a fighting trajectory (Averill, 1982). It may also reflect the subjects knowledge that the display of tears to a father will allow for him to back down, to fulfil the role of male supporter and comforter without losing face. Further, fathers are the least likely of all family positions to be the target of physical aggression. A certain trepidation therefore exists towards expressing anger to fathers; the most common way to do so is through fulfilling a role of passivity and subordinance.

Conversely individuals are very likely to direct their feelings of anger toward female children. Female children are significantly more likely to be the recipients of physical aggression by another family member when they have angered them in some way. This contradicts Averill (1982) who found that men are more frequently the target of anger and aggression than women. The reason for this may be in major difference acknowledged previously between the two studies. Whilst Averill looked at anger from an everyday perspective this study looks at anger within the realm of the family. The social rules regarding the monitoring and display of affect are likely to be substantially different between families and non-related members of the general community.

A reciprocal relationship appears to be at work here. Whilst fathers are viewed as being in the position of immediate power over all other family members, daughters, or sisters conversely are viewed as being subordinate to all other family positions. The finding that people who are perceived as being "weak" have anger directed towards them more frequently when they provoke anger in others, and are more likely to bear the brunt of misdirected anger than other "powerful" or more "reactive" people has been demonstrated previously (Torestad, 1990). Female children are unlikely to be the recipient of tears in another family member and are highly likely to have physical aggression and verbal conflict directed toward them, suggests that family members feel they can manipulate the female child, or display their anger toward her in a mode which does not involve making themselves appear inferior to her. Rather it asserts their dominance within the family over her.

Sons/brothers are likely to be informed when they have caused feelings of anger in other family members. Male children most frequently engage in verbal conflict with family members which is characterised by escalating angry exchanges with no attempts at resolution. Contrary to female children male children are not very likely to experience physical aggression when they have provoked another family member. There are many similarities therefore in how male children and male adults within the family are treated when they have provoked anger.

In summary how a subject expresses anger is dependent upon his or her interpretation of the relationship between their position and the position of the target of their anger. Crawford et al., (1990) points out that "what individuals feel to be appropriate to and useful for their personal needs is pregiven in the form of dominant cultural values' (p.4). Thus how we behave within our homes well reflects the social norms of emotional behaviour, for example, the expression of anger to a male parent in the form of aggression, or verbal conflict is not be perceived as potentially beneficial, given that it is likely to lead to a forceful put down by the father/husband and as such angry feelings provoked by this family member are likely to be suppressed and hidden or expressed in an indirect manner. Conversely the expression of tears serve a functional purpose in that it allows for the expression of one's anger toward a father/husband and allow for the resolution of angry feelings.

FAMILY'S BELIEF REGARDING THE DISCLOSURE OF ANGRY FEELINGS IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE SUBJECT'S BELIEF

Whilst for most variables the family belief and experience of anger mirrored the subject's personal beliefs and experiences (i.e., subjects whose families hold the belief that anger should be expressed hold a similar belief, and subject's whose family believe that anger should be hidden also hold the same belief) those subjects who report that their family has a differential rule regarding the expression of anger (that is that it should be expressed

dependent upon circumstances) are significantly more likely to hold the belief that anger should be hidden.

Thus whilst overall it does appear that family beliefs are by-and-large adopted by individual family members, if families are inconsistent in their application of the rules regarding emotional displays, individual's may, through negative reinforcement, come to withhold their feelings. The message they receive from family members may be too muddled. Even though family members may believe that by acknowledging 'shades of grey' in family anger and the right to become angry over some things, but not others, members of these families appear not to have not been able to sufficiently develop adequate rules regarding the display of anger within the family. If an individual is uncertain what the response will be toward his or her expression of an emotion they will withhold it rather than leaving themselves open to a challenge or dismissal of their feelings.

HOW FAMILY MEMBERS ARE SEEN TO BEHAVE WHEN ANGRY

In light of evidence which demonstrates the pervasive influence situational factors have on one's willingness to react when angry (Novaco, 1979) the claim is made that one of the most poignant situational factors would be one's family which is heavily influenced by the dynamics which regulate familial interactions. The social representation of a role an individual occupies within a family determines to a large extent the form of the emotional expression of anger. Possibly even how it is experienced. That individual's both see and explain the behaviour of family members when angry in a highly stereotypical manner demonstrates that social representations of emotional behaviour serve as a parameter from within which an individual views angry behaviour in others. For in reality the victim or the perpetrator in an angry confrontation are not different people. Rather they are the same kinds of people who merely see things differently depending upon the role they occupy and the biases inherent within these roles (Baumeister, Stillwell & Wotman, 1990). Because we are not aware of this discrepancy, victims and perpetrators construct angry events quite differently. Victims base their reconstructions of angry events on how they feel, whereas perpetrators retell an incident

based on what the victim said or did without attempting to ascribe feelings to the victim (Baumeister, et al., 1990). Different people in the same situation are not likely to respond in the same way; their behaviour, thoughts, and discourse will be regulated by their understanding of the social expectations and acceptance of these restrictions for themselves.

The results indicate that when we view a family member as being angry a complex interaction between our position and family members occurs. Subjects describe the behaviour of their family members' in highly stereotypical ways. It also becomes apparent that certain types of words are used to describe family members angry behaviour. The following are representative of the types of language used to describe family members' angry behaviour;

MOTHERS/WIVES: yells, "blah blahed on", argues, 'silent scream', throws a spaz.

FATHERS/HUSBANDS: pig headed, seethes, ignores, withdraws, explodes verbally.

DAUGHTERS/SISTERS: yells abuse in high pitch tone, swears.

SONS/BROTHERS: explodes (verbally and physically), hits, tantrum, strikes out, yells.

There is a tendency to use words which are generally perceived as derogatory when describing the angry behaviour of family members'. Thus the coping mechanisms and reactions of our family members when angry appear to be perceived as being less sophisticated than our own. Further we view others as being less in control when angry than we do our selves *"My wife has a short fuse when angry, my son tends to overact whenever I am angered by him . . . my daughter just gets in a sulk" (Subject, 53, father).* We see our own angry behaviour as acceptable and justified, whilst generating description of family members behaviour, and their understanding of our own angry feelings as being inadequate.

Mothers are seen to become involved in angry interchanges but not necessarily in the conflict itself. Rather mothers/wives are most frequently noted to attempt to find a resolution through discussion. This reflects a tendency for women to discuss their feelings (e.g., Richman, LeVine, New & Howgin, 1988) and to actively search for a resolution to conflicts in

he home (Vuchinich, 1987). Women are more cautious regarding the potential relationship costs and changes to lives which may accompany anger display (Egerton, 1988) as such they may be more willing to search for a resolution to family anger in the hope that any potential cost to the family and its members will be reduced. This may well be associated with the phenomenon of deselfing (Lerner, 1985), whereby a woman makes too much of her self comparable under stress within a marriage. The desire to 'see' the family working may be intense for a women, due to socialisation she may fall back on modes of behaviour which she witnessed in her mother and which have had positive consequences in the past.

Indeed, a similar desire to seek a solution is also evident in the female child. However the manner in which this is most frequently achieved is through tears. This mirrors an earlier finding that even from a very early age young girls are likely to become involved in family arguments and to search for a resolution (Cummings, 1987; Cummings et al., 1987) and that the expression of anger within the family is particularly distressing for girls (Block et al., 1986; Cummings et al., 1991). That a large number of young girls respond with tears may indicate the powerlessness that young girls face, or even fear (recall that this was the family position most likely to be the target of another family member's anger in the form of physical aggression).

The role of tears in angry interchanges has been investigated previously. Campbell & Muncer (1987) found that angry feelings are hidden by women, resulting in much anxiety and tension, so that when self control does break, tears (crying/weeping) are the most frequent result. For a young female then the use of tears may serve a highly functional purpose. It provides a 'safe' way of expressing anger whilst engendering sympathy or guilt in family members rather than physical aggression. Averill (1982) too, found that women are predominantly more likely to cry when angry and that tears are most likely to illicit sympathy. Tears are generally a response to other emotional feelings such as frustration, sadness and/or helplessness. Tears generally cause the instigator, or target of anger to respond 'positively' (comforting, apology and/or improved listening were cited as most common responses to

tears). The young female by appearing submissive, or being hurt allows the more powerful family members within the altercation to back down or retreat without losing face, for example a father when faced with a daughter dissolving in tears can fill the male role of supporter and protector. Tears in these cases allow for the preservation of the family and the familial roles. So too, is such behaviour positively reinforcing; roles are not threatened, the woman/girl is comforted, anger dissipates and family functioning resumes.

Recent research suggests that women, through the use of a reflective coping style (a socially appropriate means of verbalising their angry feelings towards significant others) (e.g., Thomas, 1989; Thomas & Williams, 1990), are better able to cope with anger than men and are generally more articulate (Richman, et al., 1988). These forms of anger expression may be quite functional. They allow for the display of angry feelings in the family without directly threatening other family members.

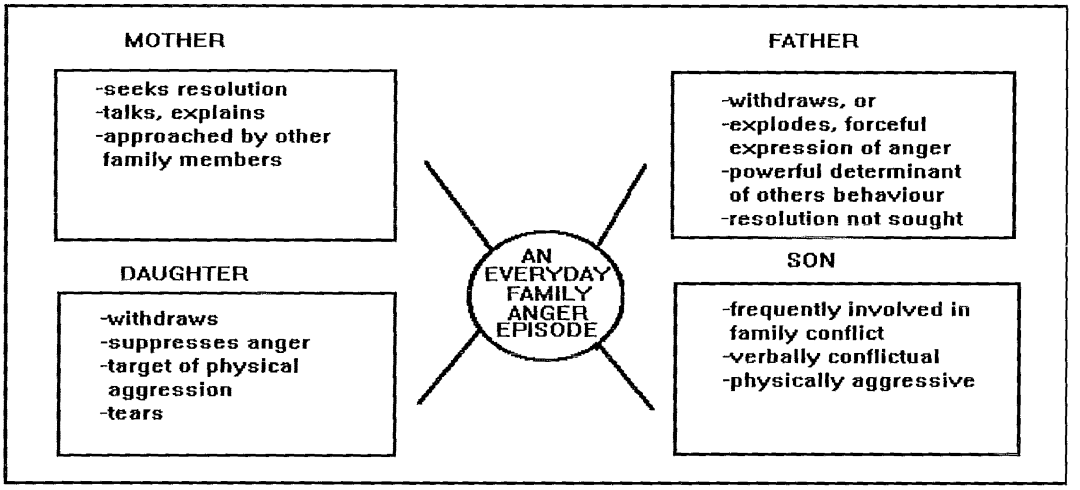
Male family members however are seen to respond in quite the opposite way. Fathers show a significant movement toward being perceived as withdrawing from family anger and are not seen to search for a resolution. When fathers do become involved in angry exchanges they are described as being verbally conflictual. Conversely a male child is likely to become involved in family anger and this is most frequently manifested in the form of physical aggression and verbal conflict. They also show a tendency to use tears.

An explanation of these findings seems to be best achieved through a developmental perspective. Responses when angry are quite different for men dependent upon their age (as this reflects their position within the family). Thus, by assuming the role of father it appears that some quite quantitative differences in how anger is experienced or seen to be experienced occur. Averill (1982) characterises male behaviour when angry as *vertical aggression*, whereby males react to an antagonist with an increasing level of forcefulness and assertion. This mode of behaviour is characteristic of fathers/husbands in this study when angry had been directed toward them. Further, this behaviour is indicative of the role of the

'all-powerful' male head of the household. A position a male assumes only once he has had children. Through virtue of his role then he is in a position above his children; including the young male. As such the behaviour of the young male child when angry is likely to reflect both his desire to model and imitate his father (Kurdeck, 1994) but also his inability to completely fulfil this role. This may be evident by his attempts to become involved in the family anger interchange in such a forceful, though inappropriate manner. That young males are most likely to be aggressive of all age and gender groups has been documented cross-culturally (Rohner, 1970). Further frustration at not being able to fully imitate his father may manifest itself in a tendency to display aggression, verbal conflict and even tears (though this may be more so for younger sons-this question referred to all members of the subject's family).

This tendency to view males as being of the 'silent, strong and uncommunicative' type who are either very logical, bottling up their emotions, or showing anger whilst rejecting the woman's anger is juxtaposed against the 'caricature' of a woman patiently explaining and talking about the incident whilst viewing themselves as being highly emotional. It also serves as evidence of the highly stereotypical way in which men and women interact when angry (Kelley, Cunningham, Grishman, Lefebvre, Sink, & Yabon, 1978; Sullaway & Christensen, 1983). It is interesting too to note that in the descriptions of emotional behaviour for genders the behavioural responses of males when angry, regardless of age, are characteristically identified as being more reactive than women's responses. Even though male coping responses when angry (withdrawal and refusal to resolve or a forceful demonstration of power) are more 'emotional' than women's (who tended to explain and seek and a resolution) the emotional behaviour of females appears to be predominantly viewed as being the emotional reaction.

FIGURE 12 GENERALISED PORTRAYAL OF INDIVIDUAL'S VIEW OF THEIR BEHAVIOUR AND THE BEHAVIOUR OF FAMILY MEMBERS DURING A FAMILY ANGER EPISODE



From the detailed descriptions subjects gave of both their emotional behaviour when angry and their descriptions of the emotional behaviour of family members when angry a picture of how people respond as a function of their position within the family emerges. As is evident these are highly stereotypical and represent how subjects see themselves, and others, in everyday instances of family anger and as such describe general behavioural attributes of family members. Further they may not necessarily describe accurately how a person resolves anger outside the family, rather it serves as an overall interactive picture of families when angry.

One final, interesting issue is whether angry feelings actually manifest themselves differently within an individual dependent upon their position or whether the interpretation of similar behaviour is differential because of the position the individual occupies. Scherer (1982) provides some evidence to uphold the assertion that how an emotional state is labelled closely relates to the individual's experience of the emotion. Therefore we can assume that not only do family members appear to behave in such stereotypical ways but that their actual experience of the emotion is closely reflected in their behaviour (indeed close relationships existed between the cognitive and behavioural components of anger). Not only do individuals

see the behaviour of other family members' as highly stereotypical (these are people with whom the individual has lived with for the majority of their lives) and dependent upon their position of power within the family, BUT, and most importantly, individuals tend to describe their own behaviour in the same highly socialised, typically gender stereotyped manner. The explanations generated to explain ones own behaviour are based upon and closely related to the social representations and explanations generated to explain the angry behaviour of other family members.

9.4 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ANGER IN THE HOME

All variables which were tested to investigate whether individual views were related to family views yielded a significant result; all relationships were very strong and there was a high level of association between an individual's experience and the family's experience of anger. A subject's personal belief about informing members when they had caused anger was closely related and reflective of their family's attitude. So too was the subject's frequency of physical aggression related to the reported family frequency of physical aggression, and the frequency of angry feelings related to the frequency of family anger episodes. Thus it appears that the individual's experience of emotion is indeed highly shaped by the familial experience.

The claim that anger episodes are social events gains much support from these findings. The interactions of family members when angry is best understood in terms of the social contract between participants (Tavris, 1982). These results strongly support the theoretical view of social constructivists; anger was described largely in terms of social interactions between family members; for instance, the probable outcomes to the expression of anger and the effects of expressing anger on family members. Emotions appear to be a social phenomenon rather than an inherent one, even though physiological processes obviously play an integral role. The terms utilised to describe feelings, the emotion labels generated to explain behaviour, in this instance anger, merely classify types of behaviours which become

distinguishable and defined through cultural and social rules. No evidence emerged in the present study to support the assertion that emotions are by nature discrete rather an overwhelming 93% of subjects report that they feel another emotion when the experience anger within a family situation.

However, this figure alone does not support the above statement that emotions are by nature heterogeneous. Rather the finding that the experience of another emotion when angry is not a random act; emotional behaviour which compliments anger is most frequently associated with it. Those emotions akin to sadness, helplessness, frustration and hurt are most frequently reported to occur in conjunction with the experience of anger. This supports previous findings, for instance Lopez and Thurman (1986) found that frustration is most strongly correlated with anger, whilst Scherer(1986) notes that anger more frequently occurred with 'another' emotion, most commonly fear and sadness. Averill (1982) concludes similar findings; people (especially women) equate their angry feelings with being hurt or with a fear of hurting others. Noticeably in this study, no male subject commented that they felt fearful when angry; the one exception was a 12 year old male who was concerned about showing his anger around his father "*because I am scared he will punish me" (Subject 15, male).* Indeed, few subjects report feeling happy, or relieved when angry at family members, even though humour has been linked to a decrease in angry responses to anger-provoking situations (Smith, 1973). It becomes evident that it is indeed hard to examine emotions one-at-a-time; "emotions are complex, intertwined, and difficult to delineate, [with] many emotions being overlaid one upon another in the same situation (Crawford, et al., 1990).

Strong cultural influences appear to play a pivotal role here. Regardless of the highly contentious possible gender differences in the experience of anger; the expression of anger is, by-and-large, considered inappropriate and reflective of somebody who is out-of-control (Stearns & Stearns, 1986; Thomas, 1991). As such socialisation gives us the clear message that having, let alone expressing anger is not appropriate (e.g., Laiken & Schneider, 1980). Subsequent feelings of guilt and/or sadness may be concomitant to the feeling of anger.

Further, when we become angry in a family situation we are angry at those we love, those we trust; it is these people, who through some act or verbalisation have caused us to feel wronged in some way. Thus those feelings akin to being hurt by a perceived unjustifiable comment by a child or spouse; or a helplessness at being able to make your husband or wife understand your feelings, or feelings of frustration at the behaviour of the children, lend themselves to occur in conjunction with anger because of the context within which they occur.

The experience of anger in the family is something most subjects were at least wary of. The expression of anger to family members was something many people feel concerned and uncomfortable about. Generally unless very strong feelings are experienced many people hide their anger from family members, *"I try to hide it* [anger] *unless I feel threatened then I show it" (Subject 19, mother)* and *"I don't tell them I'm angry because I don't want to stir", (Subject 80, daughter).*

Whilst previous work has highlighted gender differences therefore dealing solely with the differences between how adult males and adult females perceive and display anger, the preceding analysis of the results suggest that it is the perceived power of the family member (as defined by their position and gender) which has the greatest influential effect on ones experience of anger. Therefore, any talk of gender issues needs to be rethought, and even reformulated, so as to be intrinsically related to the inherent power structures within family relationships, and indeed which permeate every avenue of our social lives.

9.5 A FUNCTIONAL MODEL OF ANGER EXPRESSION IN FAMILIES

This research documents the finding that anger is a common experience for all families. Rather than reflecting a breakdown of family communication systems, frequent anger within a family could actually indicate greater individual involvement within their family. So too could it be viewed as an essential part of family functioning, an event necessary for the maintenance

of the family. Recall that families were more likely to experience an anger episode during a week than they were to spend social time together. From the above analysis it becomes apparent that people obviously place a high importance on how anger is expressed within one's family. Indeed, negative family events are the most frequently recalled emotional family event (Scherer, 1986).

The experience of anger within a family is not likely to be characterised by calm, reasoned discussion. Rather family anger is, in the first instance, most likely to be characterised by a highly dynamic, emotionally charged exchange of yelling, screaming, slamming doors, refusal to discuss issues and tears. Emotional behaviours which are reciprocated by family members in return (Margolin, 1989). All too familiar elements for most families. These emotional behaviours are especially susceptible to stereotyped beliefs. Very definite groupings of behaviours emerged for each family position. Not only do subjects view the emotional behaviour of family members in highly stereotypical way, but so too do they view their own behaviour by the same yard stick.

One is left with the question of why?, what function does the expression of anger in this way serve? Whilst these behaviours detailed herein are characteristic of a family at the time of anger this is not to say that families do not spend time discussing or talking about the incident afterwards, rather that due to the intensity of their emotions when angry such discussion appears rare. Why then do we become so unable to control our emotions, especially anger? When angry one frequently says things one wishes one had not. Furthermore, as members of a family individuals appear ready to accept the excuse that things were said in anger and are not necessarily 'true' (even though we may admit an element of truth exists). Functionally it may be that the expression of anger within the home is a means by which an individual can express feelings which would otherwise not be accepted if not spoken in anger. Anger expression then can enable a person to assertively confront provocation or injustice.

Thus anger, the 'out-of-control' expression of sometimes very intense, irrational, even trivial thoughts and feelings, may be the acceptable mode of expression for these feelings within a family (it could be argued that humour serves a similar function both within the family and society). The expression of these thoughts through another overt channel may not be accepted.

This would appear to be supported by the finding that there are very stereotypical ways in which we act, and which we view the actions of others when angry. Thus whilst anger may have at face level all the guise of an out-of-control expression of overwhelming emotional feelings, it is highly likely that rules and boundaries are, if only covertly, controlling ones anger expression to family members.

The researcher therefore concludes that the expression and feeling of anger within the family serves a number of purposes;

1. Anger provides an excuse for the expression of thoughts and behaviour which would be otherwise unacceptable through the classification of it by the social consciousness as a state to which we are passive recipients.
2. Anger provides an outlet for thoughts and behaviours which whilst upsetting on an everyday level are not perceived as threatening to the family structure
3. The 'uncontrollable' thoughts and behaviour are rigidly defined and controlled through cultural stereotypes governing emotional behaviour and expression.

In a family a provoking situation does not occur within a vacuum, the effect of the provocative activity on the target causes a chain of events that influences both the provocateur, the provoked and any other individual that are present. Thus an anger provoking situation within a family may be a catalyst added to a complex chemical experiment, the experience of one family member when angry will in turn effect the experience of another family member. A family is not a single unit rather it is an aggregate of individual personalities whose emotional behaviour is shaped by social, familial and individual variables.

Psychologically then the position of the person who occupies the role of the provoker and target dictates how the angry episode will be played out. Familial roles have important consequential effects on interpersonal conflicts. Over time the replay of these events results in the socialisation of affect; emotional scripts that reflect social and familial beliefs and are based on historical precedents. The scripts are adopted by the individual in order to explain ones own and other family members behaviour. The two main variables which appear to influence the socialisation of emotions are gender and age, both of which may be viewed as related to the individual's position of power within their society and family. The experience of anger within the family subserves the social, economic and political roles individuals occupy within society.

The functional nature of anger can be best described when a holistic view of the family, the individual and their place within a value-embedded culture is taken. Cultural views of the expression of anger (how society expects anger to be regulated and displayed) impact on the family, which in turn influence the individual. The individual's personally held beliefs are adopted through an interactive relationship between familial rules and those that evolve based on the individual's gender and position within the family.

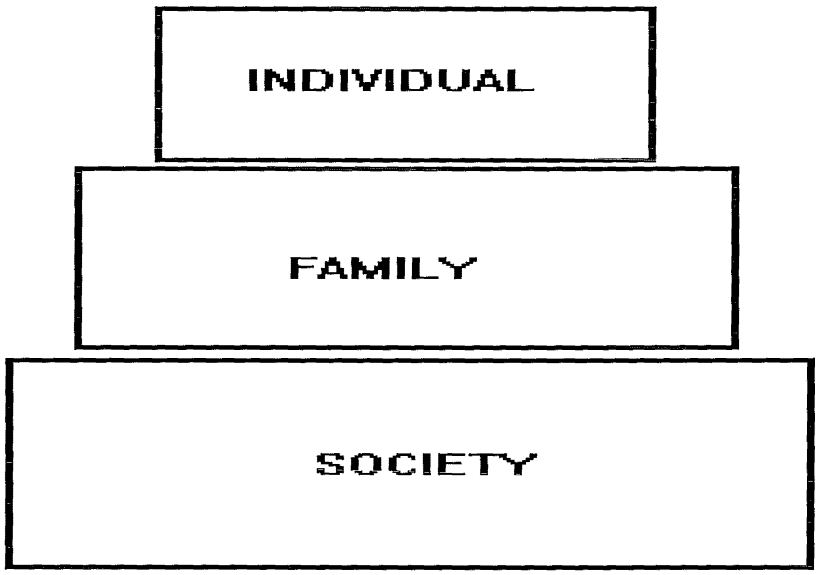
Families and family members' build up a dynamic model for the acceptable expression of anger (e.g., fathers are expected not to become involved in anger but will frequently express their anger through loud outbursts to which family members are expected to yield), which detail how the angry person is expected to react when angry as well as providing essential information as to the reactions of other family members to this persons anger. When a person obviously flouts these rules and displays anger in an inappropriate manner or becomes angry over an incident or object which is considered unjustified or without true intent this individual is seen to be functioning outside of the normal family mode of emotional behaviour. The extreme reactions which may be evident when someone does indeed 'step outside' these roles may be evidence of both the belief that the displayed emotional behaviour is not the

norm, but also an attempt by the rest of the family to bring the functioning of the errant individual back into line with everyday family functioning, thereby serving to protect the family.

As people age and change their position within the family, the mode in which they express and view anger in others also alters due to their change in position of power and as a function of their gender. As such emotional socialisation may be viewed as a dynamic ongoing process which is constantly capable of changing but rarely does as any direct or readily observable change is perceived by family members as directly challenging the family unit itself.

9.6 THE RESEARCHER'S ANSWER TO THE QUESTION "WHAT ARE EMOTIONS?"

FIGURE 13 THE THREE BUILDING BLOCKS OF EMOTION



Emotions may be viewed as being comprised of three basic building blocks;

1. SOCIETY/CULTURE: This level encompasses both the predominant social view of how emotions should be expressed as well as any cultural variations. Culture is embedded within society. It is recognises that the experience of living within a society which does not reflect the cultural beliefs of an individual, may well impact on emotional functioning in a way that it would may not an individual who does identify with the predominant society.

2. FAMILY: Within society smaller units function. One of the family's main functions is the socialisation of emotions. These structures are known as families. The family functions as an entity, based on a symbolic description it holds of itself and it's members' in relation to the broader culture within which it exists. Its' healthy functioning is dependent in part on its ability to maintain the values, modes of behaviour and attitudes of the society, or culture within which it functions. In turn its functioning is also dependent upon the beliefs, expectations and behaviours of the individuals of whom the family is structured. Each family member brings into the family a unique set of emotional experiences. These become interwoven and formulate a characteristic mode or pattern of emotional functioning for each family.

3. INDIVIDUAL: The individual is a passive recipient of the two previous building blocks which interact to form the foundations of their emotional experiences in the present and future. Therefore, whilst we may feel we are actively constructing our lives this is generally carried out within well defined, socially predetermined parameters. Most of which have been readily adopted by each individual in an unconscious desire to function within the family and society into which we are born. It is within these boundaries that we are free to act. Thus our emotional functioning may be seen to differ within the broad guidelines of emotional functioning that are defined by both one's society and family.

Emotions do serve an adaptive function. They are necessary to ensure our social survival. The evolution of emotions is such that it is hypothesised that prior to the development of societies within which individuals live communally and functioned co-

dependently that emotions may well have not existed on such a complex level. Thus humans have the potential to 'feel' as is necessary to ensure the maintenance of society, perhaps to a lesser extent the social order. For example, historically women didn't feel subordinate or angry that their place was in the home, women were scared of having the vote. It was not until anger came to be recognised as an emotion women could feel, something they 'should' feel that social changes surrounding women's place in society occurred. The development of the concept of romantic love within literary circles had a similarly dramatic influence on how society viewed relationships and marriage.

Those emotions which preserve society are maintained, those that do not or who threaten the structure of society vanish, or are actively squashed. It is highly likely that as society develops so too will the emotions which are necessary to ensure its functional survival. It is possible that behavioural groupings of feelings and explanations generated for them which are not commonly observable or that do not 'normally' occur together, or even exist within contemporary society may evolve in the future.

Emotions as well as being embedded within the above structure are formed through three processes. Physiologically humans have the make up to experience obvious bodily changes brought about by changes in their environment. At the crudest level these could be reduced to degrees of arousal. However, in order to serve a social function the generation of cognitive explanations through social representations of feeling states, and the subsidiary component of behavioural emotional scripts, where the behavioural component is the enactment of the social role, occur and allow for the individual to give a meaning to his or her feeling states such that it will allow the individual to adapt or alter their behaviour in conjunction with changes in the environment. As such emotions are constituted through our efforts to make our own and others' behaviour intelligible. Emotions are constituted in our appraisal and evaluation of occurrences and events and of other people's behaviour, as well as through our own enactment of the socially appropriate behaviour. They both express and communicate our reflected experience of making sense of our world and ourselves.

Thus whilst traditional theories of emotion are based on the premise that the fundamental aspect of an emotion is the physiological experience, and whilst they accept that we learn socially how to label the physiological events as specific emotions, social constructivism takes this a step further by regarding the affective and cognitive components as an integral part of the syndrome which is the emotion. Intersubjectivitiy (that aspect of human communication which arises out of common experience) makes it possible for us to communicate with each other about how we feel because we are social beings. The construction of language is the vehicle through which this is achieved. One can not look at emotions as any one of these processes-to do so would be to only investigate a part of the experience. How we behave emotionally depends on what we feel, the explanations we generate for these feelings, and the way we respond and act as a consequence of these. Further the cognitive and behavioural processes can not be separated; for instance the discussion of one preceding the other (the old "chicken-and-the-egg" problem of psychology) is redundant-one does not exist within our culture without the other.

It is within this setting that families function, that families experience anger. Family functioning therefore reflects the broader social order by reinforcing those emotions considered necessary and teaches children to respond emotionally within pregiven boundaries. The socialisation of emotions may be viewed as one of the prime goals of the family. Anger has a special place within society. The paradox of anger is such that the dynamic expression of anger is a necessary outlet for the ventilation of feelings which arise from confining behaviour within preset social limits, yet its very expression (in extreme terms) may threaten and challenge the very social order. Anger therefore is one of the most precipitative emotions for social change.

The beliefs we have about anger, the interpretations we give to the experience, are as important to our understanding of the emotion as anything intrinsic to the emotion itself. Why we are angry is determined by social convention that follows cultural rules. "We seek the

meaning to our emotions and actions, and we accept the explanations most in harmony with our preconceptions, needs and history" (Tavris, 1982, p.20). Further whilst it may not be the intent of family members to behave in such apparently stereotypical ways as were evident within this study, it does appear that through the dynamic functioning within the family, that their behaviour is perceived by both themselves and others as filling these stereotypes. The main function of which is the preservation of the family construct.

9.7 ISSUES OF WEAKNESS IN THIS RESEARCH

By and large this research has focused on a quantitative method of analysis, whilst this was not the Researchers initial intent, time and space prevented an exploration into the actual scripts that families generated to explain angry episodes. Such an exploration would be vitally beneficial; and is a major failing of this research. It would give clear indications as to how families actually represent their emotional behaviours in their discourse as well as allowing for a detailed analysis of how we reconstruct emotional episodes when angry. Perhaps the focus of research needs to be changed. Research should be on the message we are giving our child with regard to gender- and position appropriate emotional behaviour rather than 'another investigation' into what the message is. There may be much to gain from an analysis of our experiences of childhood.

The value of a qualitative methodology would also fit well with the social constructivist approach; social constructivism has been adopted by this author to represent a holistic approach to research in social sciences. Current theoretical debate appears greatly centred around the notion of binary opposition, for example qualitative research versus quantitative research. Rather than devaluing one particular mode of analysis and investigation, a more accurate and representative picture of emotional experience may be gained through the complementive employment of both methodologies. The utilisation of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies allows for an inclusive and embracing look at emotions as well as allowing social scientists to generate more accurate theories of emotional events.

Further, this research has concentrated on family variables or socially determined and valued variables (e.g., gender and age) and has not investigated the influence of variables related to the individual which may have an equally important bearing on family functioning. It would therefore appear valid to level the criticism that this research appears to dismiss individual variables which may influence family functioning when angry. This was not the

intent; future research which details the interaction of external events which may impact on family functioning when angry would therefore be valuable.

9.8 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Further research is obviously needed in this area; this was one study to investigate the manifestation of anger in families. Whilst its validity appears robust, its reliability can only be tested through replicability. Specific areas of interest have also arisen out of this research, for example, how emotions are socialised and the role of language in the development of emotional scripts would give vital clues as to how families construct social representations of anger. A more detailed analysis into exactly what scripts families are generating (rather than based largely upon supposition as they are herein) would also be invaluable. Individual variables which influence family functioning also need to be investigated, for instance the link between social supports and anger; do low levels of social support effect individual functioning with regard to anger and is there a flow on effect from this to family functioning? If such research did find significant differences it would need to also contemplate the direction of the relationship between social support and anger. Thus the causal pathway between the familial experience of anger and the individual is unclear and requires more investigation.

To reiterate an earlier point, there has been a relative degree of paucity of research into this area. However, that emotion plays an important, and functional role within the family has been well demonstrated. Further, the home is a major (if not the major) place where socialisation occurs. The lack of research, indeed the very lack of researchers into the area of the development and function of emotions within the home, suggests that psychologists have failed to adequately address an important issue. One which, it might be added has increasingly come under indirect scrutiny through other disciplines. For instance, if we suspend all political cynicism briefly, the push towards recognising parents as first teachers demonstrates the general concern with the need to be aware of the existence and the effects of patterns of behaviour on our functioning. If we view all of our behaviour as being social in

origin the importance placed on how these processes and patterns develop becomes immediately apparent. Yet again we return to the lack of adequate research, and arguably the lack of recognised and appropriate methodologies for this type of research. It appears to the researcher that first, and foremost, the need is to increase awareness and to educate ourselves on the importance of how it is that we come to regulate and express our emotions. Then through a systematic manner detailed explorations into how emotions are constructed, how they manifest themselves within the family and how they are regulated is required. Once this has been achieved we are in a better position to understand how we function when angry in all manner of situations; including occupationally, within political conflict, in the classroom as well as within the family.

APPENDIX I

FAMILY ANGER QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How often during the last week did *you* become angry within a family situation? (please tick one)

-not at all
-1 to 2 times during the week
-3 to 5 times during the week
-2 times each day
-3 times each day
-4 to 5 times each day
-6 to 10 times each day
-more than 10 times each day

2. Approximately how often during the last week would you estimate that anger was expressed by *the members of your family* within a family situation? (please tick one).

-not at all
-1 to 2 times during the week
-3 to 5 times during the week
-2 times each day
-3 times each day
-4 to 5 times each day
-6 to 10 times each day
-more than 10 times each day

3. Approximately how often during the last week would you estimate that *your family or most of the members of your family* took part in a social activity together, (e.g., went for a walk, had dinner together without the television on etc.)? (please tick one).

-not at all
-1 to 2 times during the week
-3 to 5 times during the week
-2 times each day
-3 times each day
-4 to 5 times each day
-6 to 10 times each day
-more than 10 times each day

4. When *you* are angry at your family, or at members of your family, how much control do you have over what you say, and do (e.g., your facial expressions, tone-of-voice etc.)? (please circle the number that best describes your level of control).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

I am always in complete completely control of my actions

When I am angry I am overcome

5. When you are angry at your family, or at members of your family, how much control do you have over your inner thoughts and the images in your head?(please circle the number that best describes your level of control).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

I am always in complete control of my actions

When I am angry I am completely overcome

6. Do you try to express your anger in different ways around different family members?

___ yes ___no

If *yes*, who specifically? and why? (please state each family member that you treat differently when angry and give an example of how you treat this person).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Do *you* think that if your family, or a member of your family has done something to make you angry, that you should tell them about it? (please tick one)

___yes ___no ___depends

Why exactly?

_____

_____

_____

8. If a member of your family was angry what would *your family's* attitude towards him/her expressing that anger be? (please tick one)

___ if you are angry you should let the family know

___you should never show your anger to other family members

___you should show your anger to other family members depending on the situation

If depends, please give an example of

When it would be *OK* to show anger toward your family

_____

_____

_____

When it would *not be OK* to show anger toward your family

_____

_____

_____

9. When you are angry at members of the public do you try to control the outward expression of your anger more than when you are angry at a family member, or angry within a family situation?

___yes ___no

10. How often does physical aggression accompany or follow anger in one, some, or all of your *family members?* (please circle the number that best describes your level of control)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Never Almost always

11. How often does physical aggression accompany or follow anger in one, some, or all of your *family members?* (please circle the number that best describes your level of control)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Never Almost always

12. When some, or all of your family experiences anger, how long does the anger last? is the anger addressed?

_____

_____

_____

13. What would be the one issue, or 'thing', that whenever raised will cause family anger?

_____

_____

_____

14. If you had to give one, or two words only, about the way individual family members <u>usually</u> act when angry what would those words be? (please state the family member and the word, that in your mind, best describes their usual behaviour when angry).

_____

_____

_____

15. If you are a parent have you ever had an "angry urge", or an overwhelming desire to hurt, or lash out at your children?

___yes ___no

If yes, in what situation? and what was your response?

_____

_____

_____

16. Think back to the most recent incident in which you felt angry within a family situation. Before proceeding any further think carefully about the experience and how it made you feel.

What was that incident? (please state briefly that incident even if it now seems trivial or unimportant, even silly).

_____

_____

_____

17. Thinking back to this incident *only*, while you were feeling angry in this situation did you feel any other emotions?

___yes ___no

If yes, what was/were the other emotions you felt?

_____

_____

_____

18. What was the response of family members to your anger in this situation?

_____

_____

_____

If this is not how they *usually* respond, how would you describe the overall most common response of family members to your anger?

_____

_____

_____

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